

THE POETICAL WORKS OF ALFRED,
LORD TENNYSON



ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON
WITH GROUP OF CHARACTERS FROM
"THE IDYLLS OF THE KING"

THE POETICAL WORKS
OF
ALFRED,
LORD TENNYSON

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LORD TENNYSON

ALFRED TENNYSON, first Baron Tennyson, the fifteenth Poet Laureate in succession to Edmund Spenser, was born in the Lincolnshire hamlet of Somersby, of which the Rev. Dr. George Clayton Tennyson, his father, was rector, on August 6, 1809, one of a family of twelve children. When seven years old he was sent to the Grammar School at Louth. The headmaster was one of the old-fashioned flogging sort, and Alfred got heartily to hate school, which he left in 1820, to return to his father's roof.

Dr. Tennyson taught his boys the classics, mathematics and natural science until they went to Cambridge, giving them, besides, the unfettered range of his library.

Alfred was a constant reader, seldom going for a walk—his favourite recreation—without a book in his pocket. From boyhood he was a keen and sympathetic observer of Nature in every mood and sphere, and possessed all the equipment for a natural historian.

Poetry, however, was his first and only love and, along with his brother Charles, he showed his homage to the Muse by publishing, in 1827, *Poems by Two Brothers*.

On February 20, 1828, Alfred and Charles matriculated at Trinity College, Cambridge. Nervous of temperament, modest, retiring, and fond of solitude, Alfred did not make friends fast, but those friends whose adoption he had tried, he grappled to his soul. In 1829, to his astonishment, Tennyson won the Chancellor's Prize, for which he had not intended to compete, with his blank-verse poem of *Timbuctoo*, beating Hallam, the son of the historian, and Milnes (afterwards Lord Houghton) among others.

From Cambridge, Alfred was summoned home in February, 1831, in consequence of the illness of his father, who died suddenly in his library chair in the following month. The family, however, were enabled to occupy the rectory until 1837, when they were obliged to flit from Somersby at last and, to be within easy access of London, settled at High Beech in Epping Forest. Here they remained for a time, the poet leading a quiet, contemplative life. In 1840, on the advice of a London physician, the Tennysons moved to Tunbridge Wells, but the climate was found to be too trying, and in the next year they went to Boxley, near Maidstone, mainly to be near the Lushingtons, one of whom, Edward Lushington, the Greek scholar and Egyptologist, had married Tennyson's youngest sister, Cecilia. Nearness to London enabled the poet to go to town as often as he pleased, and he was a frequent visitor at "The Cock" in Fleet Street

and Bertolini's at the "Newton's Head," close to Leicester Square. His son tells us that he considered "a perfect dinner was a beefsteak, a potato, a cut of cheese, a pint of port, and afterwards a pipe (never a cigar)."

From 1845 to 1850 Tennyson's people resided in Cheltenham, from whence, however, he made frequent excursions to visit friends in London and elsewhere. In 1850, *In Memoriam*, his masterpiece, was published. This connected series of poems bears the stamp of genius in every stanza.

By now, the success of his poems had given his fortunes an upward cast and Tennyson married Miss Emily Sellwood at Shiplake-on-Thames on June 13, 1850. The honeymoon was spent at Tent Lodge, Coniston. Ere the year was out his worldly position was strengthened by an event he could not have foreseen. William Wordsworth died on the 23rd of April, and the vacant Laureateship was then offered to Tennyson who, after due deliberation, consented to fill the post, to which he was appointed on November 19. It was an ideal and, in fact, the only proper succession to Wordsworth.

Unhappily the Tennysons' first baby died at birth, but better fortune awaited the next, a boy also, who was born at their home in Twickenham on August 11, 1852. He was named Hallam, and became the second Baron. The death of the Iron Duke on September 14 of that year inspired the stately *Ode to the Duke of Wellington*, which has taken its place amongst the imperishable treasures of English literature. The poet and his wife had had unusual difficulty in finding a house to their liking, but in 1853 they happened upon the mansion of Farringford, standing in delectable grounds, near Freshwater, in the Isle of Wight, and having acquired the option of purchase, moved into it in November and made it their home for forty years. Here their third child, named Lionel, was born on March 16, 1854. This was the year of the fierce fighting in the Crimea, and *The Times* account of the Balaklava Ride, with its phrase of "some one had blundered," so wrought upon the Laureate that he composed, at white heat, his famous *Charge of the Light Brigade*. This poem so gratified the soldiers that Tennyson had 1,000 copies of it printed next year for distribution among them.

In 1855 *Maud* was published and the book sold all right. With the gold it fetched, the poet bought Farringford. In this year, too, the degree of D.C.L. was conferred upon him by Oxford University with due ceremony in the Sheldonian Theatre.

Soon after Prince Albert's death (December 14, 1861) Tennyson learned that Princess Alice desired him to commemorate her father, and accordingly he arranged, early in 1862, for a new edition of the *Idylls*, for which he wrote the chaste and impressive Dedication to the Prince Consort. This tender tribute brought him under the personal notice of the Court and, in April, he paid his first visit to the Queen.

One of the penalties inseparable from fame is the homage of the devotee and the curiosity of the tourist. Tennyson found their intrusion on his privacy at Farringford intolerable, and he ultimately resolved to build another house to which he might go at such seasons as the attentions of his fans verged on persecution. For this purpose he purchased in 1867 a superbly situated estate at Blackdown, near Haslemere.

If Tennyson's Spring had been tempestuous, compensation was vouchsafed in his Autumn, for this was peaceful, mellow and happy.

During the autumn of 1883 Tennyson made a prolonged and most happy cruise in the *Pembroke Castle*, visiting the western islands of Scotland, the Norwegian fjords and Denmark. In the course of the voyage Mr. Gladstone, on behalf of the Queen, offered him a peerage, which he consented to accept, recognizing the honour intended to be done to Literature in his person.

After Tennyson had entered upon his eighty-fourth year, his physical decline became very marked. Though feeble and nearly blind, he tried to read his favourite bits in Shakespeare, whose works were never far from his pillow. He was quite conscious that his end was near, saying, "That's well," in answer to the doctor's intimation. At half-past one in the morning of October 6, 1892, he died. They laid him in Westminster Abbey, on October 12. Three weeks after his demise his last volume was published, *The Death of Ænone and Other Poems*. The last poem he finished was *Whirl and Follow the Sun*, and his last piece of prose, the preface to *Kapiolani*.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
ADELINE	29
AFTER-THOUGHT	421
ALL THINGS WILL DIE	6
AMPHION	125
ARRIVAL, THE (THE DAY-DREAM).	122
ATTEMPTS AT CLASSIC METRES, IN QUANTITY	424
AUDLEY COURT	90
AYLMER'S FIELD	382
BALLAD OF ORIANA, THE	34
BEGGAR MAID, THE	135
BLACKBIRD, THE	70
BOADICEA	413
"BREAK, BREAK, BREAK"	139
BRIAIN	73
BROOK, THE	266
BUONAPARTE	15
BURIAL OF LOVE, THE	4
CAPTAIN, THE	426
"CARESS'D OR CHIDDEN BY THE DAINTY HAND"	425
CHARACTER, A	30
CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE, THE	277
CHORIC SONG (THE LOTOS-EATERS)	62
CHORUS IN AN UNPUBLISHED DRAMA, WRITTEN VERY EARLY	9
CIRCUMSTANCE	36
CLARIBEL	21
"COME NOT, WHEN I AM DEAD"	138
COMING OF ARTHUR, THE	428
CONCLUSION (THE MAY QUEEN)	60
CONCLUSION (THE PRINCESS).	197
CRADLE SONG	402
DAISY, THE	274
DAY-DREAM, THE	121
DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR, THE	71
DEDICATION, A	413
DEDICATION (IDYLLS OF THE KING)	278
DEPARTURE, THE (THE DAY-DREAM)	123
DESERTED HOUSE, THE	33
DIRGE, A	34
DORA	87
DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN, A	64
DUALISMS	13
DYING SWAN, THE	33
EAGLE, THE	138
EDWARD GRAY	126
EDWIN MORRIS; OR, THE LAKE	93
ELAINE	327
ELEANORE	41
ELEGIACS	1

CONTENTS

	PAGE
ENGLISH WAR SONG	73
ENID	279
ENOCH ARDEN	306
EPIC, THE	76
EPILOGUE (THE DAY-DREAM)	125
EXPERIMENTS IN QUANTITY	413
FAREWELL, A	135
FATIMA	46
FLOWER, THE	410
"FLOWER IN THE CRANNIED WALL"	482
FREEDOM	73
GARDENER'S DAUGHTER, THE; OR, THE PICTURES	82
GODIVA	113
GOLDEN SUPPER, THE	473
GOLDEN YEAR, THE	105
GOOSE, THE	75
GRANDMOTHER, THE	403
GRASSHOPPER, THE	8
GUINEVERE	352
HERO TO LEANDER	7
HESPERIDES, THE	16
HEXAMETERS AND PENTAMETERS	424
HIGHER PANTHEISM, THE	481
HOLY GRAIL, THE	436
"HOW" AND THE "WHY," THE	1
✓ IDYLLS OF THE KING	278
✓ IN MEMORIAM	200
IN QUANTITY	415
IN THE VALLEY OF CAUTERETZ	410
ISABEL	22
ISLET, THE	411
KATE	18
KRAKEN, THE	12
LADY CLARA VERE DE VERE	57
LADY CLARE	132
✓ LADY OF SHALOTT, THE	38
✓ L'ENVOI (THE DAY-DREAM)	124
LETTERS, THE	270
LILIAN	21
LINES FOR THE MAUSOLEUM OF THE DUCHESS OF KENT	424
LOCKSLEY HALL	108
LORD OF BURLEIGH, THE	133
LOST HOPE	9
LOTOS-EATERS, THE	61
LOVE	11
LOVE AND DEATH	34
LOVE AND DUTY	104
LOVE AND SORROW	10
LOVE, PRIDE, AND FORGETFULNESS	9
LOVE THOU THY LAND	73
LUCRETIVS	482
MADLINE	24
MARGARET	70
MARIANA	23
MARIANA IN THE SOUTH	40
MAUD	244
MAY QUEEN, THE	58

CONTENTS

xi

	PAGE
MERMAID, THE	36
MERMAN, THE	36
MILLER'S DAUGHTER, THE	43
MORAL (THE DAY-DREAM)	124
MORTE D'ARTHUR	77
"MOVE EASTWARD, HAPPY EARTH, AND LEAVE"	138
"MY LIFE IS FULL OF WEARY DAYS"	427
MYSTIC, THE	7
 NATIONAL SONG	 13
NEW YEAR'S EVE (THE MAY QUEEN)	59
NORTHERN FARMER (NEW STYLE)	472
NORTHERN FARMER (OLD STYLE)	495
NOTHING WILL DIE	6
 O DARLING ROOM	 20
ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON	270
ODE SONG AT THE OPENING OF THE INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION, 1862	423
ODE TO MEMORY	27
ONONE	46
oi péovtes	14
ON A MOURNER	424
 PALACE OF ART, THE	 52
PASSING OF ARTHUR, THE	464
PELLEAS AND ETANRE	453
POET, THE	30
POET'S MIND, THE	31
POET'S SONG, THE	139
PRINCESS, THE	140
PROLOGUE (THE DAY-DREAM)	121
PROLOGUE (THE PRINCESS)	140
 RECOLLECTIONS OF THE ARADIAN NIGHTS	 25
REQUIESCAT	411
REVIVAL, THE (THE DAY-DREAM)	123
RINGLET, THE	412
RIFLEMEN FORM!	423
ROSALIND	18
 SAILOR BOY, THE	 411
ST. AGNES' EVE	126
ST. SIMEON STYLITES	96
SEA-FAIRIES, THE	32
SEA DREAMS	397
SIR GALAHAD	126
SIR LAUNCELOT AND QUEEN GUINEVERE	134
SISTERS, THE	51
SKIPPING-ROPE, THE	421
SLEEPING BEAUTY, THE (THE DAY-DREAM)	122
SLEEPING PALACE, THE (THE DAY-DREAM)	121
SONG—"A SPIRIT HAUNTS THE YEAR'S LAST HOURS"	20
SONG—"EVERY DAY BATH ITS NIGHT"	6
SONG—"HOME THEY BROUGHT HIM SLAIN WITH SPEARS"	425
SONG—"I THE GLOOMING LIGHT"	5
SONG—"THE GOLDEN APPLE, THE GOLDEN APPLE, THE HALLOWED FRUIT"	16
SONG—"THE LINTWHITE AND THE THROSTLECOCK"	5
SONG—"THE OWL"	25
SECOND SONG—TO THE SAME	25
SONG—"THE VOICE IS HEARD THRO' ROLLING DRUMS"	173
SONG—"WHO CAN SAY?"	18
SONNET—"AS WHEN WITH DOWNCAST EYES WE MUSE AND BROOD"	20
SONNET—"BUT WERE I LOVED, AS I DESIRE TO BE"	16
SONNET—"COULD I OUTWEAR MY PRESENT STATE OF WOR"	10
SONNET—"MINE BE THE STRENGTH OF SPIRIT FIERCE AND FREE"	14
SONNET—"O BEAUTY, PASSING BEAUTY! SWEETEST SWEET!"	16

	PAGE
SONNET—"ON THE RESULT OF THE LATE RUSSIAN INVASION OF POLAND"	20
SONNET—"SHALL THE HAG EVIL DIE WITH CHILD OF GOOD?"	11
SONNET—"THE PALLID THUNDER-STRICKEN SIGN FOR GAIN"	11
SONNET—"THOUGH NIGHT HATH CLIMBED HER PEAK OF HIGHEST NOON"	11
SONNET—TO J. M. K.	37
SONNET—WRITTEN ON HEARING OF THE OUTBREAK OF THE POLISH INSURRECTION	19
SPECIMEN OF A TRANSLATION OF THE ILIAD IN BLANK VERSE	416
STANZAS ADDED TO THE NATIONAL ANTHEM	423
SUPPOSED CONFESSIONS OF A SENSITIVE MIND	2
TALKING OAK, THE	100
TEARS OF HEAVEN, THE	10
"THE FORM, THE FORM ALONE IS ELOQUENT!"	425
THIRD OF FEBRUARY, THE, 1852	422
THREE SONNETS TO A COQUETTE	425
TIMBUCTOO	417
TITHONUS	407
TO —, AFTER READING A LIFE AND LETTERS	131
TO A LADY SLEEPING	10
TO — "ALL GOOD THINGS HAVE NOT KEPT ALOOF"	15
TO CHRISTOPHER NORTH	21
TO — "CLEAR-HEADED FRIEND, WHOSE JOYFUL SCORN"	24
TO E. L., ON HIS TRAVELS IN GREECE	131
TO — "I SEND YOU HERE A SORT OF ALLEGORY"	52
TO J. S.	72
TO — "SAINTED JULIET! DEAREST NAME!"	5
TO THE QUEEN	21
TO THE REV. F. D. MAURICE	276
TWO VOICES, THE	114
ULYSSES	107
VICTIM, THE	480
VISION OF SIN, THE	135
VIVIEN	312
VOYAGE, THE	409
WAGES	481
WALKING TO THE MAIL	91
"WAN SCULPTOR, WEEPEST THOU TO TAKE THE CAST?"	426
WAR, THE	423
WE ARE FREE	14
WELCOME TO ALEXANDRA, A	412
WILL	277
WILL WATERPROOF'S LYRICAL MONOLOGUE	128
"YOU ASK ME WHY, THO' ILL AT EASE"	73

EARLY POEMS

"POEMS, CHIEFLY LYRICAL"

(1830)

ELEGIACS

Low-FLOWING breezes are roaming the
broad valley dimmed in the
gloaming :

Thoro' the black-stemmed pines only
the far river shines.

Creeping through blossomy rushes
and bowers of rose-blowing
bushes,

Down by the poplar tall rivulets
babble and fall.

Barketh the shepherd-dog cheerly ;
the grasshopper carolleteth clearly ;

Deeply the turtle coos ; shrilly the
owlet halloos ;

Winds creep ; dews fall chilly : in her
first sleep earth breathes stilly :
Over the pools in the burn water gnats
murmur and mourn.

Sadly the far kine loweth : the glim-
mering water outfloweth :

Twin peaks shadowed with pine slope
to the dark hyaline.

Low-throned Hesper is stay'd between
the two peaks ; but the Naiad

Throbbing in mild unrest holds him
beneath in her breast.

The antient poetess singeth, that Hes-
perus all things bringeth,

Smoothing the wearied mind : bring
me my love, Rosalind.

Thou comest morning and even ; she
someth not morning or even.

False-eyed Hesper, unkind, where is
my sweet Rosalind ?

THE "HOW" AND THE "WHY" ?

I AM any man's suitor,
If any will be my tutor :

Some say this life is pleasant,
Some think it speedeth fast :

In time there is no present,
In eternity no future,

In eternity no past.

We laugh, we cry, we are born, we die,
Who will riddle me the *how* and the
why ?

The bulrush nods unto its brother,
The wheatears whisper to each other :
What is it they say ? What do they
there ?

Why two and two make four ? Why
round is not square ?

Why the rock stands still, and the
light clouds fly ?

Why the heavy oak groans, and the
white willows sigh ?

Why deep is not high, and high is not
deep ?

Whether we wake, or whether we
sleep ?

Whether we sleep, or whether we die ?
How you are you ? Why I am I ?

Who will ridde me the *how* and the
why ?

The world is somewhat ; it goes on
somehow ;

But what is the meaning of *then* and
now ?

I feel there is something ; but *how*
and what ?

SUPPOSED CONFESSIONS OF A SECOND-RATE

I know there is somewhat ; but what
and why ?
I cannot tell if that somewhat be I.

The little bird pipeth—"why ?
why ? "

In the summerwoods when the sun
falls low

And the great bird sits on the oppo-
site bough,

And stares in his face and shouts,
"how ? how ? "

And the black owl scuds down the
mellow twilight,

And chaunts, "how ? how ? " the
whole of the night.

Why the life goes when the blood is
spilt ?

What the life is ? where the soul
may lie ?

Why a church is with a steeple built ;
And a house with a chimneypot ?

Who will riddle me the how and the
what ?

Who will riddle me the what and
the why ?

SUPPOSED CONFESSIONS OF A SECOND - RATE SENSITIVE MIND NOT IN UNITY WITH ITSELF

Oh God ! my God ! have mercy now.
I faint, I fall. Men say that thou
Did'st die for me, for such as *me*,
Patient of ill, and death, and scorn.
And that my sin was as a thorn
Among the thorns that girt thy brow,
Wounding thy soul.—That even now,
In this extremest misery
Of ignorance, I should require
A sign ! and if a bolt of fire
Would rive the slumbrous summer-
noon

While I do pray to thee alone,
Think my belief would stronger grow !
Is not my human pride brought low ?
The boastings of my spirit still ?

The joy I had in my freewill
All cold, and dead, and corpselike
grown ?

And what is left to me, but thou,

And faith in thee ? Men pass me by ;
Christians with happy countenances—
And children all seem full of thee !
And women smile with saintlike
glances

Like thine own mother's when she
bowed

Above thee, on that happy morn
When angels spake to men aloud,
And thou and peace to earth were
born.

Goodwill to me as well as all—

—I one of them : my brothers they :
Brothers in Christ—a world of peace
And confidence, day after day ;
And trust and hope till things should
cease,

And then one Heaven receive us all.

How sweet to have a common faith !
To hold a common scorn of death !
And at a burial to hear

The creaking cords which wound
and eat

Into my human heart, whene'er
Earth goes to earth, with grief, not
fear,

With hopeful grief, were passing
sweet !

A grief not uninformed, and dull,
Hearted with hope, of hope as full
As is the blood with life, or night
And a dark cloud with rich moon-
light.

To stand beside a grave, and see
The red small atoms wherewith we
Are built, and smile in calm, and say,—
" These little motes and grains shall
be

Clothed on with immortality
More glorious than the noon of day.

All that is pass'd into the flowers,
And into beasts, and other men,
And all the Norland whirlwind
showers

From open vaults, and all the sea
O'erwashes with sharp salts, again
Shall fleet together all, and be
Indued with immortality."

Thrice happy state again to be
The trustful infant on the knee !
Who lets his waxen fingers play
About his mother's neck, and knows

SENSITIVE MIND NOT IN UNITY WITH ITSELF

Nothing beyond his mother's eyes.
 They comfort him by night and day
 They light his little life alway ;
 He hath no thought of coming woes ;
 He hath no care of life or death,
 Scarce outward signs of joy arise,
 Because the Spirit of happiness
 And perfect rest so inward is ;
 And loveth so his innocent heart,
 Her temple and her place of birth,
 Where she would ever wish to dwell,
 Life of the fountain there, beneath
 Its salient springs, and far apart,
 Hating to wander out on earth,
 Or breathe into the hollow air,
 Whose chillness would make visible
 Her subtil, warm, and golden breath,
 Which mixing with the infant's blood,
 Fulfills him with beatitude.
 Oh ! sure it is a special care
 Of God, to fortify from doubt,
 To arm in proof, and guard about
 With triplemail'd trust, and clear
 Delight, the infant's dawning year.
 Would that my gloomed fancy were
 As thine, my mother, when with
 brows
 Propped on thy knees, my hands up-
 held
 In thine, I listened to thy vows,
 For me outpoured in holiest prayer—
 For me unworthy !—and beheld
 Thy mild deep eyes upraised, that
 knew
 The beauty and repose of faith,
 And the clear spirit shining through.
 Oh ! wherefore do we grow awry
 From roots which strike so deep ? why
 dare
 Paths in the desert ? Could not I
 Bow myself down, where thou hast
 knelt,
 To th' earth—until the ice would melt
 Here, and I feel as thou hast felt ?
 What Devil had the heart to scathe
 Flowers thou hadst reared—to brush
 the dew
 From thine own lily, when thy grave
 Was deep, my mother, in the clay ?
 Myself ? Is it thus ? Myself ? Had
 I
 So little love for thee ? But why
 Prevailed not thy pure prayers ?
 Why pray

To one who heeds not, who can save
 But will not ? Great in faith, and
 strong
 Against the grief of circumstance
 Wert thou, and yet unheard. What if
 Thou pleadest still, and seest me
 drive
 Through utter dark a full-sailed skiff,
 Unpiloted i' the echoing dance
 Of reboant whirlwinds, stooping low
 Unto the death, not sunk ! I know
 At matins and at evensong,
 That thou, if thou wert yet alive,
 In deep and daily prayers would'st
 strive
 To reconcile me with thy God.
 Albeit, my hope is gray, and cold
 At heart, thou wouldstest murmur still—
 " Bring this lamb back into thy fold,
 My Lord, if so it be thy will."
 Would'st tell me I must brook the rod,
 And chastisement of human pride ;
 That pride, the sin of devils, stood
 Betwixt me and the light of God !
 That hitherto I had defied,
 And had rejected God—that grace
 Would drop from his o'erbrimming
 love,
 As manna on my wilderness,
 If I would pray—that God would
 move
 And strike the hard hard rock, and
 thence,
 Sweet in their utmost bitterness,
 Would issue tears of penitence
 Which would keep green hope's life.
 Alas !
 I think that pride hath now no place
 Nor sojourn in me. I am void,
 Dark, formless, utterly destroyed.

 Why not believe then ? Why not
 yet
 Anchor thy frailty there, where man
 Hath moored and rested ? Ask the
 sea
 At midnight, when the crisp slope
 waves,
 After a tempest, rib and fret
 The broad imbas'd beach, why he
 Slumbers not like a mountain tarn ?
 Wherefore his ridges are not curls
 And ripples of an inland meer ?
 Wherefore he moaneth thus, nor can

THE BURIAL OF LOVE

Draw down into his vexéd pools
All that blue heaven which hues and
paves

The other ? I am too forlorn,
Too shaken : my own weakness fools
My judgment, and my spirit whirls,
Moved from beneath with doubt and
fear.

" Yet," said I, in my morn of youth,
The unsunned freshness of my
strength,

When I went forth in quest of truth,
" It is man's privilege to doubt,
If so be that from doubt at length
Truth may stand forth unmoved of
change,

An image with profulgent brows,
And perfect limbs, as from the storm
Of running fires and fluid range
Of lawless airs, at last stood out
This excellence and solid form
Of constant beauty. For the Ox
Feeds in the herb, and sleeps, or fills
The hornéd valleys all about,
And hollows of the fringed hills
In summerheats, with placid lows
Unfearing, till his own blood flows
About his hoof. And in the flocks
The lamb rejoiceth in the year,
And raceth freely with his fere,
And answers to his mother's calls
From the flowered furrow. In a time,
Of which he wots not, run short pains
Through his warm heart ; and then,
from whence

He knows not, on his light there falls
A shadow ; and his native slope,
Where he was wont to leap and climb,
Floats from his sick and filmed eyes,
And something in the darkness draws
His forehead earthward, and he dies.
Shall men live thus, in joy and hope
As a young lamb, who cannot dream,
Living, but that he shall live on ?
Shall we not look into the laws
Of life and death, and things that
seem,

And things that be, and analyse
Our double nature, and compare
All creeds till we have found the one,
If one there be ? " Ay me ! I fear
All may not doubt, but everywhere
Some must clasp Idols. Yet, my God,

Whom call I Idol ? let thy dove
Shadow me over, and my sins
Be unremembered, and thy love
Enlighten me. Oh teach me yet
Somewhat before the heavy clod
Weights on me, and the busy fret
Of that sharpheaded worm begins
In the gross blackness underneath.

Oh weary life ! oh weary death !
Oh spirit and heart made desolate !
Oh damnéd vacillating state !

THE BURIAL OF LOVE

His eyes in eclipse,
Pale-cold his lips,
The light of his hopes unfed,
Mute his tongue,
His bow unstrung
With the tears he hath shed,
Backward drooping his graceful
head,

Love is dead :
His last arrow is sped ;
He hath not another dart ;
Go—carry him to his dark deathbed ;
Bury him in the cold, cold heart—
Love is dead.

Oh, truest love ! art thou forlorn,
And unrevenged ? thy pleasant
wiles

Forgotten, and thine innocent
joy ?

Shall hollow-hearted apathy,
The cruellest form of perfect scorn,
With languor of most hateful
smiles,

For ever write,
In the withered light
Of the tearless eye,
An epitaph that all may spy ?
No ! sooner she herself shall die.

For her the showers shall not fall,
Nor the round sun shine that shineth
to all ;

Her light shall into darkness
change ;

For her the green grass shall not
spring,

Nor the rivers flow, nor the sweet
birds sing,

Till Love have his full revenge.

SONG

TO ———

SAINTED Juliet! dearest name!
 If to love be life alone,
 Divinest Juliet,
 I love thee, and live; and yet
 Love unreturned is like the frag-
 rant flame
 Folding the slaughter of the sacrifice
 Offered to gods upon an altar-
 throne;
 My heart is lighted at thine eyes,
 Changed into fire, and blown about
 with sighs.

SONG

I' THE glooming light
 Of middle night
 So cold and white,
 Worn Sorrow sits by the moaning
 wave;
 Beside her are laid
 Her mattock and spade,
 For she hath half delved her own deep
 grave.
 Alone she is there:
 The white clouds drizzle: her hair
 falls loose;
 Her shoulders are bare;
 Her tears are mixed with the beaded
 dews.

Death standeth by;
 She will not die;
 With glazed eye
 She looks at her grave: she cannot
 sleep;
 Ever alone
 She maketh her moan:
 She cannot speak: she can only
 weep,
 For she will not hope.
 The thick snow falls on her flake by
 flake,
 The dull wave mourns down the
 slope,
 The world will not change, and her
 heart will not break.

SONG

THE lintwhite and the throstlecock
 Have voices sweet and clear;
 All in the blooméd May.
 They from the blosmy breere
 Call to the fleeting year,
 If that he would them hear
 And stay.
 Alas! that one so beautiful
 Should have so dull an ear.

Fair year, fair year, thy children call,
 But thou art deaf as death;
 All in the blooméd May.
 When thy light perisheth
 That from thee issueth,
 Our life evanisheth:
 Oh! stay.
 Alas! that lips so cruel-dumb
 Should have so sweet a breath!

III

Fair year, with brows of royal love
 Thou comest, as a king.
 All in the blooméd May.
 Thy golden largess fling,
 And longer hear us sing;
 Though thou art fleet of wing,
 Yet stay.
 Alas! that eyes so full of light
 Should be so wandering!

IV

Thy locks are all of sunny sheen
 In rings of gold yronne,¹
 All in the blooméd May.
 We pri'thee pass not on;
 If thou dost leave the sun,
 Delight is with thee gone,
 Oh! stay
 Thou art the fairest of thy feres,
 We pri'thee pass not on.

¹ "His crispe hair in ringis was yronne."—
Chaucer, Knight's Tale.

SONG—ALL THINGS WILL DIE

Dr 7/6

ONG

i hath its night:
 ight its morn:
 dark and bright
 hours are borne;
 ! welaway!
 ower and fade;
 Golden calm and storm
 Mingle day by day.
 There is no bright form
 Doth not cast a shade—
 Ah! welaway!

When we laugh, and our mirth
 Apes the happy vein,
 We're so kin to earth,
 Pleasaunce fathers pain—
 Ah! welaway!
 Madness laugheth loud:
 Laughter bringeth tears:
 Eyes are worn away
 Till the end of fears
 Cometh in the shroud—
 Ah! welaway!

III

All is change, woe or weal;
 Joy is Sorrow's brother;
 Grief and gladness steal
 Symbols of each other;
 Ah! welaway!
 Larks in heaven's cope
 Sing: the culvers mourn
 All the livelong day.
 Be not all forlorn:
 Let us weep in hope—
 Ah! welaway!

NOTHING WILL DIE

When will the stream be awarey of
 flowing
 Under my eye?
 When will the wind be awarey of
 blowing
 Over the sky?

When will the clouds be awarey of
 fleeting?
 When will the heart be awarey of
 beating?
 And nature die?
 Never, oh! never, nothing will die;
 The stream flows,
 The wind blows,
 The cloud fleets,
 The heart beats,
 Nothing will die.

Nothing will die;
 All things will change
 Through eternity.
 'Tis the world's winter;
 Autumn and summer
 Are gone long ago.
 Earth is dry to the centre,
 But spring a new comer—
 A spring rich and strange,
 Shall make the winds blow
 Round and round,
 Through and through,
 Here and there,
 Till the air
 And the ground
 Shall be filled with life anew.

The world was never made;
 It will change, but it will not fade.
 So let the wind range;
 For even and morn
 Ever will be
 Through eternity.
 Nothing was born;
 Nothing will die;
 All things will change.

ALL THINGS WILL DIE

CLEARLY the blue river chimes in its
 flowing
 Under my eye;
 Warmly and broadly the south winds
 are blowing
 Over the sky.
 One after another the white clouds
 are fleeting;
 Every heart this May morning in
 joyance is beating
 Full merrily;

HERO TO LEANDER—THE MYSTIC

Yet all things must die.
The stream will cease to flow ;
The wind will cease to blow ;
The clouds will cease to fleet ;
The heart will cease to beat ;
For all things must die.

All things must die.
Spring will come never more.
Oh ! vanity !
Death waits at the door.
See ! our friends are all forsaking
The wine and the merrymaking.
We are called—we must go.
Laid low, very low,
In the dark we must lie.
The merry glees are still ;
The voice of the bird
Shall no more be heard,
Nor the wind on the hill.
Oh ! misery !
Hark ! death is calling
While I speak to ye,
The jaw is falling,
The red cheek paling,
The strong limbs failing ;
Ice with the warm blood mixing ;
The eyeballs fixing.
Nine times goes the passing bell :
Ye merry souls farewell.

The old earth
Had a birth,
As all men know
Long ago.
And the old earth must die.
So let the warm winds range,
And the blue wave beat the shore
For ever and morn
Ye will never see
Through eternity.
All things were born.
Ye will come never more,
For all things must die.

HERO TO LEANDER

Oh go not yet, my love,
The night is dark and vast ;
The white moon is hid in her
heaven above,
And the waves climb high and
fast.

Oh ! kiss me, kiss me, once again,
Lest thy kiss should be the last.
Oh kiss me ere we part ;
Grow closer to my heart.
My heart is warmer surely than the
bosom of the main.

O joy ! O bliss of blisses !
My heart of hearts art thou.
Come bathe me with thy kisses,
My eyelids and my brow.
Hark how the wild rain hisses,
And the loud sea roars below.

Thy heart beats through thy rosy
limbs,
So gladly doth it stir ;
Thine eye in drops of gladness
swims.
I have bathed thee with the plea-
sant myrrh ;
Thy locks are dripping balm ;
Thou shalt not wander hence to-
night,
I'll stay thee with my kisses.
To-night the roaring brine
Will rend thy golden tresses ;
The ocean with the morrow light
Will be both blue and calm ;
And the billow will embrace thee with
a kiss as soft as mine.

No western odours wander
On the black and moaning sea,
And when thou art dead, Leander,
My soul must follow thee !
Oh go not yet, my love,
Thy voice is sweet and low ;
The deep salt wave breaks in above
Those marble steps below.
The turret stairs are wet
That lead into the sea.
Leander ! go not yet.
The pleasant stars have set ;
Oh ! go not, go not yet,
Or I will follow thee.

THE MYSTIC

ANGELS have talked with him, and
showed him thrones :
Ye knew him not : he was not one of
ye,

Ye scorned him with an undiscerning
 scorn :
 Ye could not read the marvel in his
 eye,
 The still serene abstraction : he hath
 felt
 The vanities of after and before ;
 Albeit, his spirit and his secret heart
 The stern experiences of converse
 lives,
 The linked woes of many a fiery
 change
 Had purified, and chastened, and
 made free.

Always therestood before him, night
 and day,
 Of wayward vary-coloured circum-
 stance
 The imperishable presences serene,
 Colossal, without form, or sense, or
 sound,
 Dim shadows but unwaning presences,
 Fourfaced to four corners of the sky :
 And yet again, three shadows, front-
 ing one,
 One forward, one respectant, three but
 one ;
 And yet again, again and evermore,
 For the two first were not, but only
 seemed,
 One shadow in the midst of a great
 light,
 One reflex from eternity on time,
 One mighty countenance of perfect
 calm,
 Awful with most invariable eyes.
 For him the silent congregated hours,
 Daughters of time, divinely tall, be-
 neath
 Severe and youthful brows, with shin-
 ing eyes
 Smiling a godlike smile (the innocent
 light
 Of earliest youth pierced through and
 through with all
 Keen knowledges of low-embowed
 eld)
 Upheld, and ever hold aloft the cloud
 Which droops low hung on either gate
 of life,
 Both birth and death : he in the
 centre fixt,

Saw far on each side through the
 grated gates
 Most pale and clear and lovely dis-
 tances.
 He often lying broad awake, and yet
 Remaining from the body, and apart
 In intellect and power and will, hath
 heard
 Time flowing in the middle of the
 night,
 And all things creeping to a day of
 doom.
 How could ye know him ? Ye were
 yet within
 The narrower circle ; he had wellnigh
 reached
 The last, which with a region of white
 flame,
 Pure without heat, into a larger air
 Upburning, and an ether of black
 blue,
 Investeth and ingirds all other lives.

THE GRASSHOPPER

VOICE of the summer wind,
 Joy of the summer plain,
 Life of the summer hours,
 Carol clearly, bound along.
 No Tithon thou as poets feign
 (Shame fall 'em they are deaf and
 blind)
 But an insect lithe and strong,
 Bowing the scented summer flowers.
 Prove their falsehood and thy
 quarrel,
 Vaulting on thine airy feet.
 Clap thy shielded sides and carol,
 Carol clearly, chirrup sweet.
 Thou art a mailed warrior in youth
 and strength complete ;
 Armed cap-a-pie,
 Full fair to see ;
 Unknowing fear,
 Undreading loss,
 A gallant cavalier,
Sans peur et sans reproche,
 In sunlight and in shadow,
 The Bayard of the meadow.

LOVE, PRIDE, AND FORGETFULNESS—LOST

I would dwell with thee,
 Merry grasshopper,
 Thou art so glad and free,
 And as light as air;
 Thou hast no sorrow or tears,
 Thou hast no compt of years,
 No withered immortality,
 But a short youth sunny and free.
 Carol clearly, bound along,
 Soon thy joy is over,
 A summer of loud song,
 And slumbers in the clover.
 What hast thou to do with evil
 In thine hour of love and revel,
 In thy heat of summer pride,
 Pushing the thick roots aside
 Of the singing floweréd grasses,
 That brush thee with their silken
 tresses?
 What hast thou to do with evil,
 Shooting, singing, ever springing
 In and out the emerald glooms,
 Ever leaping, ever singing,
 Lighting on the golden blooms?

The fountain-pregnant
 riven
 To shapes of wildest anar
 By secret fire and midnight
 That wander round their w
 cones,
 The subtle life, the countless forl
 Of living things, the wondrous
 tones
 Of man and beast are full of
 strange
 Astonishment and boundless
 change.

The day, the diamonded night,
 The echo, feeble child of sound,
 The heavy thunder's griding might,
 The herald lightning's starry bound,
 The vocal spring of bursting bloom,
 The naked summer's glowing birth,
 The troublous autumn's sallow gloom,
 The hoarhead winter paving earth
 With sheeny white, are full of
 strange
 Astonishment and boundless
 change.

LOVE, PRIDE, AND FORGET- FULNESS

ERE yet my heart was sweet Love's
 tomb,
 Love laboured honey busily,
 I was the hive, and Love the bee,
 My heart the honeycomb.
 One very dark and chilly night
 Pride came beneath and held a light.
 The cruel vapours went through all,
 Sweet Love was withered in his cell;
 Pride took Love's sweets, and by a
 spell
 Did change them into gall;
 And Memory though fed by Pride
 Did wax so thin on gall,
 Awhile she scarcely lived at all.
 What marvel that she died?

CHORUS,

IN AN UNPUBLISHED DRAMA, WRITTEN
 VERY EARLY

THE varied earth, the moving heaven,
 The rapid waste of roving sea,

Each sun which from the centre flings
 Grand music and redundant fire,
 The burning belts, the mighty rings,
 The murmurous planets' rolling
 choir,
 The globe-filled arch that, cleaving air,
 Lost in its own effulgence sleeps,
 The lawless comets as they glare,
 And thunder through the sapphire
 deeps,
 In upward strength, are full of
 strange
 Astonishment and boundless
 change.

LOST HOPE

You cast to ground the hope which
 once was mine:
 But did the while your harsh decree
 deplore,
 Embalming with sweet tears the
 vacant shrine,
 My heart, where Hope had been
 and was no more.

So on an oaken sprout Almeida, if my heart were substance-
 A goodly acorn grew ; less,
 But winds from heaven shook the Then might thy rays pass through
 acorn out, to the other side,
 And filled the cup with dew. So swiftly, that they nowhere would
 abide,
 But lose themselves in utter empti-
 ness.

THE TEARS OF HEAVEN

HEAVEN weeps above the earth all
 night till morn,
 In darkness weeps as all ashamed to
 weep,
 Because the earth hath made her
 state forlorn
 With self-wrought evils of unnum-
 bered years,
 And doth the fruit of her dishonour
 reap.
 And all the day heaven gathers back
 her tears
 Into her own blue eyes so clear and
 deep,
 And showering down the glory of
 lightsome day,
 Smiles on the earth's worn brow to
 win her if she may.

LOVE AND SORROW

O MAIDEN, fresher than the first
 green leaf
 With which the fearful springtide
 flecks the lea,
 Weep not, Almeida, that I said to
 thee
 That thou hast half my heart, for
 bitter grief
 Doth hold the other half in sovran-
 ty.
 Thou art my heart's sun in love's
 crystalline :
 Yet on both sides at once thou
 canst not shine ;
 Thine is the bright side of my heart,
 and thine
 My heart's day, but the shadow of my
 heart,
 Issue of its own substance, my heart's
 night
 Thou canst not lighten even with *thy*
 light,
 All powerful in beauty as thou art.

Half-light, half-shadow, let my spirit
 sleep ;
 They never learned to love who
 never knew to weep.

TO A LADY SLEEPING

O THOU whose fringed lids I gaze
 upon,
 Through whose dim brain the wingéd
 dreams are borne,
 Unroof the shrines of clearest vision,
 In honour of the silver-fleckéd morn :
 Long hath the white wave of the
 virgin light
 Driven back the billow of the dream-
 ful dark.
 Thou all unwittingly prolongest night,
 Though long ago listening the poiséd
 lark,
 With eyes dropt downward through
 the blue serene,
 Over heaven's parapets the angels
 lean.

SONNET

COULD I outwear my present state of
 woe
 With one brief winter, and induce i'
 the spring
 Hues of fresh youth, and mightily
 outgrow
 The wan dark coil of faded suffering—
 Forth in the pride of beauty issuing
 A sheeny snake, the light of vernal
 bowers,
 Moving his crest to all sweet plots of
 flowers
 And watered vallies where the young
 birds sing ;
 Could I thus hope my lost delight's
 renewing,

I straightly would command the tears
 to creep
 From my charged lids; but inwardly
 I weep:
 Some vital heat as yet my heart is
 wooing:
 This to itself hath drawn the frozen
 rain
 From my cold eyes and melted it
 again.

SONNET

THOUGH Night hath climbed her peak
 of highest noon,
 And bitter blasts the screaming
 autumn whirl,
 All night through archways of the
 bridgéd pearl,
 And portals of pure silver walks the
 moon.
 Walk on, mysoul, nor crouch to agony,
 Turn cloud to light, and bitterness to
 joy,
 And dross to gold with glorious
 alchemy,
 Basing thy throne above the world's
 annoy.
 Reign thou above the storms of
 sorrow and ruth
 That roar beneath; unshaken peace
 hath won thee;
 So shalt thou pierce the woven glooms
 of truth.
 So shall the blessing of the meek be on
 thee;
 So in thine hour of dawn, the body's
 youth,
 An honourable eld shall come upon
 thee.

SONNET

SHALL the hag Evil die with child of
 Good,
 Or propagate again her loathéd kind,
 Thronging the cells of the diseased
 mind,
 Hateful with hanging cheeks, a
 withered brood,
 Though hourly pastured on the
 salient blood?

Oh! that the wind which bloweth
 cold or heat
 Would shatter and o'erbear the brazen
 beat
 Of their broad vans, and in the soli-
 tude
 Of middle space confound them, and
 blow back
 Their wild cries down their cavern
 throats, and slake
 With points of blast-borne hail their
 heated eyne!
 So their wan limbs no more might
 come between
 The moon and the moon's reflex in
 the night,
 Nor blot with floating shades the solar
 light.

SONNET

THE pallid thunder-stricken sigh for
 gain,
 Down an ideal stream they ever float,
 And sailing on Pactolus in a boat,
 Drown soul and sense, while wistfully
 they strain
 Weak eyes upon the glistening sands
 that robe
 The understream. The wise, could
 he behold
 Cathedralled caverns of thick ribbéd
 gold
 And branching silvers of the central
 globe,
 Would marvel from so beautiful a
 sight
 How scorn and ruin, pain and hate
 could flow:
 But Hatred in a gold cave sits below;
 Pleached with her hair, in mail of
 argent light
 Shot into gold, a snake her forehead
 clips,
 And skins the colour from her
 trembling lips.

LOVE

THOU, from the first, unborn, undying
 love,
 Albeit we gaze not on thy glories near,

Before the face of God didst breathe
 and move,
 Though night and pain and ruin and
 death reign here.
 Thou foldest, like a golden atmo-
 sphere,
 The very throne of the eternal God :
 Passing through thee the edicts of his
 fear
 Are mellowed into music, borne abroad
 By the loud winds, though they up-
 rend the sea,
 Even from its central deeps : thine
 empery
 Is over all : thou wilt not brook
 eclipse ;
 Thou goest and returnest to His lips
 Like lightning : thou dost ever brood
 above
 The silence of all hearts, unutterable
 Love.

To know thee is all wisdom, and old
 age
 Is but to know thee : dimly we behold
 thee
 Athwart the veils of evil which infold
 thee.
 We beat upon our aching hearts in
 rage ;
 We cry for thee ; we deem the world
 thy tomb.
 As dwellers in lone planets look upon
 The mighty disk of their majestic sun,
 Hollowed in awful chasms of wheeling
 gloom,
 Making their day dim, so we gaze on
 thee.
 Come, thou of many crowns, white-
 robéd love,
 Oh ! rend the veil in twain : all men
 adore thee ;
 Heaven crieth after thee ; earth
 waiteth for thee :
 Breathe on thy wingéd throne, and it
 shall move
 In music and in light o'er land and
 sea.

III

And now—methinks I gaze upon thee
 new,
 As on a serpent in his agonies

Awe-stricken Indians ; what time laid
 low
 And crushing the thick fragrant reeds
 he lies,
 When the new year warmbreathéd on
 the earth,
 Waiting to light him with her purple
 skies,
 Calls to him by the fountain to uprise.
 Already with the pangs of a new birth
 Strain the hot spheres of his con-
 vulséd eyes,
 And in his writhings awful hues begin
 To wander down his sable-sheen
 sides,
 Like light on troubled waters ; from
 within
 Anon he rusheth forth with merry din,
 And in him light and joy and strength
 abides ;
 And from his brows a crown of living
 light
 Looks through the thick-stemmed
 woods by day and night.

THE KRAKEN

BELOW the thunders of the upper
 deep ;
 Far far beneath in the abysmal sea,
 His antient, dreamless, uninvaded
 sleep,
 The Kraken sleepeth : faintest sun-
 lights flee
 About his shadowy sides : above him
 swell
 Huge sponges of millennial growth
 and height ;
 And far away into the sickly light,
 From many a wondrous grot and
 secret cell
 Unnumbered and enormous polypi
 Winnow with giant fins the slumber-
 ing green.
 There hath he lain for ages and will
 lie
 Battening upon huge seaworms in his
 sleep,
 Until the latter fire shall heat the
 deep ;
 Then once by men and angels to be
 seen,
 In roaring he shall rise and on the
 surface die.

ENGLISH WAR SONG

Who fears to die ? Who fears to die ?

Is there any here who fears to die ?
He shall find what he fears ; and none
shall grieve

For the man who fears to die ;
But the withering scorn of the many
shall cleave

To the man who fears to die.

Chorus.—Shout for England !
Ho ! for England !
George for England !
Merry England !
England for aye !

The hollow at heart shall crouch
forlorn,
He shall eat the bread of common
scorn ;

It shall be steeped in the salt, salt
tear,
Shall be steeped in his own salt
tear :

Far better, far better he never were
born
Than to shame merry England here.

Chorus.—Shout for England ! etc.

There standeth our ancient enemy ;
Hark ! he shouteth—the ancient
enemy !
On the ridge of the hill his banners
rise ;

They stream like fire in the skies ;
Hold up the Lion of England on high
Till it dazzle and blind his eyes.

Chorus.—Shout for England ! etc.

Come along ! we alone of the earth
are free ;
The child in our cradles is bolder
than he ;
For where is the heart and strength
of slaves ;

Oh ! where is the strength of slaves ?
He is weak ! we are strong ; he a slave,
we are free ;

Come along ! we will dig their graves.

Chorus.—Shout for England ! etc.

T.P.W.

There standeth our ancient enemy ;
Will he dare to battle with the free ?
Spur along ! spur amain ! charge to
the fight !

Charge ! charge to the fight !
Hold up the Lion of England on high !
Shout for God and our right !

Chorus.—Shout for England ! etc.

NATIONAL SONG

THERE is no land like England
Where'er the light of day be ;
There are no hearts like English
hearts,

Such hearts of oak as they be.
There is no land like England
Where'er the light of day be ;
There are no men like Englishmen,
So tall and bold as they be.

Chorus.—For the French the pope
may shrive 'em,
For the devil a whit we heed 'em :
As for the French, God speed 'em
Unto their heart's desire,
And the merry devil drive 'em
Through the water and the fire.

Full chorus.—Our glory is our
freedom,
We lord it o'er the sea ;
We are the sons of freedom,
We are free.

There is no land like England,
Where'er the light of day be ;
There are no wives like English wives,
So fair and chaste as they be.
There is no land like England,
Where'er the light of day be ;
There are no maids like English maids,
So beautiful as they be.

Chorus.—For the French, etc.

DUALISMS

Two bees within a chrystal flower-
bell rockéd
Hum a lovelay to the west wind
at noontide.

WE ARE FREE—SONNET

Both alike, they buzz together With mellow preludes, "We are
 Both alike, they hum together free."
 Through and through the The streams through many a lilled
 flowered heather. row
 Where in a creeping cove the wave Down-carolling to the crisped sea,
 unshocked Low-tinkled with a bell-like flow
 Lays itself calm and wide, Atween she blossoms, "We are
 Over a stream two birds of free."
 glancing feather
 Do woo each other, carolling
 together.
 Both alike, they glide together.
 Side by side;
 Both alike, they sing together, ALL thoughts, all creeds, all dreams
 Arching blueglosséd necks beneath are true,
 the purple weather. All visions wild and strange;
 Two children lovelier than Love Man is the measure of all truth
 adown the lea are singing, Unto himself. All truth is change:
 As they gambol, lily garlands ever All men do walk in sleep, and all
 stringing: Have faith in that they dream:
 Both in blosmwhite silk are For all things are as they seem to all,
 frockéd: And all things flow like a stream.

Like, unlike, they roam together
 Under a summer vault of
 golden weather;
 Like, unlike, they sing together
 Side by side,
 Mid-May's darling golden lockéd,
 Summer's tanling diamond eyed.

WE ARE FREE

THE winds, as at their hour of birth,
 Leaning upon the ridged sea,
 Breathed low around the rolling earth

There is no rest, no calm, no pause,
 Nor good nor ill, nor light nor
 shade,
 Nor essence nor eternal laws:
 For nothing is, but all is made.
 But if I dream that all these are,
 They are to me for that I dream;
 For all things are as they seem to all,
 And all things flow like a stream.

Argal—this very opinion is only true relatively to the flowing philosophers.

POEMS

(1833)

SONNET

MINE be the strength of spirit fierce
 and free,
 Like some broad river rushing down
 alone,
 With the selfsame impulse wherewith
 he was thrown
 From his loud fount upon the echoing
 lea:—
 Which with increasing might doth
 forward flee

By town, and tower, and hill, and
 cape, and isle,
 And in the middle of the green salt sea
 Keeps his blue waters fresh for many
 a mile.
 Mine be the Power which ever to its
 sway
 Will win the wise at once, and by
 degrees
 May into uncongenial spirits flow;
 Even as the great gulfstream of
 Florida

Floats far away into the Northern
 seas
 The lavish growths of southern
 Mexico.

If thou art blest, my mother's smile
 Undimmed, if bees are on the
 wing:
 Then cease, my friend, a little while,
 That I may hear the throstle sing
 His bridal song, the boast of spring.

TO

ALL good things have not kept aloof,
 Nor wandered into other ways:
 I have not lacked thy mild reproof,
 Nor golden largess of thy praise,
 But life is full of weary days.

II

Shake hands, my friend, across the
 brink
 Of that deep grave to which I go.
 Shake hands once more: I cannot
 sink
 So far—far down, but I shall know
 Thy voice, and answer from
 below.

When, in the darkness over me,
 The four-handed mole shall scrape,
 Plant thou no dusky cypress tree,
 Nor wreathe thy cap with doleful
 crape,
 But pledge me in the flowing
 grape.

And when the sappy field and wood
 Grow green beneath the showery
 gray,
 And rugged barks begin to bud,
 And through damp holts, new-
 flushed with May,
 Ring sudden laughter of the Jay;

Then let wise Nature work her will
 And on my clay her darnels grow.
 Come only, when the days are still,
 And at my headstone whisper low,
 And tell me if the woodbines blow,

VII

Sweet as the noise in parched plains
 Of bubbling wells that fret the
 stones
 (If any sense in me remains)
 Thy words will be; thy cheerful
 tones
 As welcome to my crumbling bones.

BUONAPARTE

He thought to quell the stubborn
 hearts of oak,
 Madman!—to chain with chains,
 and bind with bands
 That island queen that sways the
 floods and lands
 From Ind to Ind, but in fair daylight
 woke,
 When from her wooden walls, lit by
 sure hands,
 With thunders, and with lightnings,
 and with smoke,
 Peal after peal, the British battle
 broke,
 Lulling the brine against the Coptic
 sands.
 We taught him lowlier moods, when
 Elsinore
 Heard the war moan along the
 distant sea,
 Rocking with shattered spars, with
 sudden fires
 Flamed over: at Trafalgar yet once
 more
 We taught him: late he learned
 humility
 Perforce, like those whom Gideon
 schooled with briars.

SONNET

O BEAUTY, passing beauty ! sweetest
 Sweet !
 How canst thou let me waste my
 youth in sighs ?
 I only ask to sit beside thy feet.
 Thou knowest I dare not look into
 thine eyes.
 Might I but kiss thy hand ! I dare
 not fold
 My arms about thee—scarcely dare
 to speak.
 And nothing seems to me so wild
 and bold,
 As with one kiss to touch thy
 blessed cheek.
 Methinks if I should kiss thee, no
 control
 Within the thrilling brain could
 keep afloat
 The subtle spirit. Even while I
 spoke,
 The bare word kiss hath made my
 inner soul
 To tremble like a lute-string,
 ere the note
 Hath melted in the silence that
 it broke.

SONNET

BUT were I loved, as I desire to be,
 What is there in the great sphere of
 the earth,
 And range of evil between death and
 birth,
 That I should fear,—if I were loved
 by thee ?
 All the inner, all the outer world of
 pain
 Clear Love would pierce and cleave,
 if thou wert mine,
 As I have heard that, somewhere in
 the main,
 Fresh-water-springs come up through
 bitter brine.
 'Twere joy, not fear, clasped hand-
 in-hand with thee,
 To wait for death—mute—careless
 of all ills,

Apart upon a mountain, though the
 surge
 Of some new deluge from a thousand
 hills
 Flung leagues of roaring foam into
 the gorge
 Below us, as far on as eye could see.

THE HESPERIDES

Hesperus and his daughters three,
 That sing about the golden tree.
 COMUS.

THE North wind fall'n, in the new-
 starred night
 Zidonian Hanno, voyaging beyond
 The hoary promontory of Soloë
 Past Thymiatæron, in calmed bays,
 Between the southern and the western
 Horn,
 Heard neither warbling of the night-
 ingale,
 Nor melody o' the Lybian lotus-flute
 Blown seaward from the shore ; but
 from a slope
 That ran bloom-bright into the Atlan-
 tic blue,
 Beneath a highland leaning down a
 weight
 Of cliffs, and zoned below with
 cedar shade,
 Came voices, like the voices in a dream,
 Continuous, till he reached the outer
 sea.

SONG

THE golden apple, the golden apple,
 the hallowed fruit.
 Guard it well, guard it warily,
 Singing airily,
 Standing about the charmed root.
 Round about all is mute,
 As the snowfield on the mountain
 peaks,
 As the sandfield at the mountain-
 foot.
 Crocodiles in briny creeks
 Sleep and stir not : all is mute.

If ye sing not, if ye make false
measure,
We shall lose eternal pleasure,
Worth eternal want of rest.
Laugh not loudly: watch the trea-
sure
Of the wisdom of the west.
In a corner wisdom whispers. Five
and three
(Let it not be preached abroad) make
an awful mystery.
For the blossom unto threefold
music bloweth;
Evermore it is born anew;
And the sap to threefold music
floweth,
From the root
Drawn in the dark,
Up to the fruit,
Creeping under the fragrant bark,
Liquid gold, honeysweet, thro' and
thro'.
Keen-eyed Sisters, singing airily,
Looking warily
Every way,
Guard the apple night and day,
Lest one from the East come and
take it away.

Father Hesper, Father Hesper, watch,
watch, ever and aye,
Looking under silver hair with a
silver eye.
Father, twinkle not thy steadfast
sight;
Kingdoms lapse, and climates change,
and races die;
Honour comes with mystery;
Hoarded wisdom brings delight.
Number, tell them over and number |
How many the mystic fruit tree
holds,
Lest the red-combed dragon slumber
Rolled together in purple folds.
Look to him, father, lest he wink, and
the golden apple be stol'n away,
For his ancient heart is drunk with
overwatchings night and day,
Round about the hallowed fruit tree
curled—
Sing away, sing aloud evermore in
the wind, without stop,

Lest his scalèd eyelid drop,
For he is older than the world.
If he waken, we waken,
Rapidly levelling eager eyes.
If he sleep, we sleep,
Dropping the eyelid over the eyes.
If the golden apple be taken
The world will be overwise.
Five links, a golden chain, are we,
Hesper, the dragon, the sisters three,
Bound about the golden tree.

Father Hesper, Father Hesper,
watch, watch, night and day,
Lest the old wound of the world
be healèd,
The glory unscalèd,
The golden apple stol'n away,
And the ancient secret revealèd.
Look from west to east along:
Father, old Himala weakens, Cauca-
sus is bold and strong.
Wandering waters unto wandering
waters call;
Let them clash together, foam and
fall.
Out of watchings, out of wiles,
Comes the bliss of secret smiles.
All things are not told to all.
Half-round the mantling night is
drawn,
Purple-fringed with even and dawn.
Hesper hateth Phosphor, evening
hateth morn.

IV

Every flower and every fruit the
redolent breath
Of this warm seawind ripeneth,
Archling the billow in his sleep;
But the landwind wandereth,
Broken by the highland-steep,
Two streams upon the violet deep:
For the western sun and the western
star,
And the low west wind, breathing
afar,
The end of day and beginning of
night
Make the apple holy and bright;

Holy and bright, round and full,
 bright and blest,
 Mellowed in a land of rest;
 Watch it warily day and night;
 All good things are in the west.
 Till midnight the cool east light
 Is shut out by the round of the tall
 hillbrow;
 But when the full-faced sunset
 yellowly
 Stays on the flowering arch of the
 bough,
 The luscious fruitage clustereth
 mellowly,
 Golden-kernelled, golden-cored,
 Sunset-ripened above on the tree.
 The world is wasted with fire and
 sword,
 But the apple of gold hangs over
 the sea.
 Five links, a golden chain, are we,
 Hesper, the dragon, and sisters three,
 Daughters three,
 Bound about
 All round about
 The gnarled bole of the charmed tree.
 The golden apple, the golden apple,
 the hallowed fruit,
 Guard it well, guard it warily,
 Watch it warily,
 Singing airily,
 Standing about the charmed root.

SONG

Who can say
 Why To-day
 To-morrow will be yesterday?
 Who can tell
 Why to smell
 The violet, recalls the dewy prime
 Of youth and buried time?
 The cause is nowhere found in rhyme.

KATE

I know her by her angry air,
 Her bright black eyes, her bright-
 black hair,
 Her rapid laughter wild and
 shrill,
 As laughter of the woodpecker
 From the bosom of a hill,
 'Tis Kate—she sayeth what she
 will:

For Kate hath an unbridled tongue,
 Clear as the twanging of a harp.
 Her heart is like a throbbing
 star.
 Kate hath a spirit ever strung
 Like a new bow, and bright and
 sharp
 As edges of the scymetar.
 Whence shall she take a fitting
 mate?
 For Kate no common love will
 feel:
 My woman-soldier, gallant Kate,
 As pure and true as blades of
 steel.
 Kate saith "the world is void of
 might."
 Kate saith "the men are gilded
 flies."
 Kate snaps her fingers at my
 vows;
 Kate will not hear of lover's sighs,
 I would I were an armed knight,
 Far-famed for well-won enter-
 prise,
 And wearing on my swarthy
 brows
 The garland of new-wreathed
 emprise;
 For in a moment I would pierce
 The blackest files of changing fight,
 And strongly strike to left and right,
 In dreaming of my lady's eyes.
 Oh! Kate loves well the bold
 and fierce;
 But none are bold enough for Kate,
 She cannot find a fitting mate.

ROSALIND

My Rosalind, my Rosalind,
 My frolic falcon, with bright eyes,
 Whose free delight, from any height
 of rapid flight,
 Stoops at all game that wing the
 skies,
 My Rosalind, my Rosalind,
 My bright-eyed, wild-eyed falcon,
 whither,
 Careless both of wind and weather,
 Whither fly ye, what game spy ye,
 Up or down the streaming wind?

The quick lark's closest-carolled strains,

The shadow rushing up the sea,
The lightning flash atween the rains,
The sunlight driving down the lea,
The leaping stream, the very wind,
That will not stay, upon his way,
To stoop the cowlslip to the plains,
Is not so clear and bold and free
As you, my falcon Rosalind.

You care not for another's pains,
Because you are the soul of joy,
Bright metal all without alloy.
Life shoots and glances thro' your veins,

And flashes off a thousand ways,
Through lips and eyes in subtle rays.
Your hawkeyes are keen and bright,
Keen with triumph, watching still
To pierce me through with pointed light ;

But oftentimes they flash and glitter
Like sunshine on a dancing rill,
And your words are seeming-bitter,
Sharp and few, but seeming-bitter
From excess of swift delight.

Come down, come home, my Rosalind,

My gay young hawk, my Rosalind :
Too long you keep the upper skies ;
Too long you roam and wheel at will ;
But we must hood your random eyes,

That care not whom they kill,
And your cheek, whose brilliant hue
Is so sparkling-fresh to view,
Some red heathflower in the dew,
Touched with sunrise. We must bind

And keep you fast, my Rosalind,
Fast, fast, my wild-eyed Rosalind,
And clip your wings, and make you love ;

When we have lured you from above,
And that delight of frolic flight, by day or night,

From North to South ;
We'll bind you fast in silken cords,
And kiss away the bitter words
From off your rosy mouth.¹

SONNET

WRITTEN ON HEARING OF THE OUT-
BREAK OF THE POLISH INSURRECTION

Blow ye the trumpet, gather from afar

The hosts to battle : be not bought and sold.

Arise, brave Poles, the boldest of the bold ;

Break through your iron shackles—
fling them far.

O for those days of Piast, ere the Czar

Grew to this strength among his deserts cold ;

When even to Moscow's cupolas were rolled

¹ Perhaps the following lines may be allowed to stand as a separate poem ; originally they made part of the text, where they were manifestly superfluous.

My Rosalind, my Rosalind,
Bold, subtle, careless Rosalind,
Is one of those who know no strife
Of inward woe or outward fear ;
To whom the slope and stream of life,
The life before, the life behind,
In the ear, from far and near,
Chimeth musically clear.
My falcon-hearted Rosalind,
Full sailed before a vigorous wind,
Is one of those, who cannot weep
For others' woes, but overleap
All the petty shocks and fears
That trouble life in early years,
With a flash of frolic scorn

And keen delight, that never falls
Away from freshness, self-upborne
With such gladness as, whenever
The fresh-flushing springtime calls
To the flooding waters cool,
Young fishes, on an April morn,
Up and down a rapid river,
Leap the little waterfalls
That sing into the pebbled pool.
My happy falcon, Rosalind,
Hath daring fancies of her own,
Fresh as the dawn before the day,
Fresh as the early seasmell blown
Through vineyards from an inland bay.
My Rosalind, my Rosalind,
Because no shadow on you falls
Think you hearts are tennis balls,
To play with, wanton Rosalind ?

SONNET—O DARLING ROOM

The growing murmurs of the Polish
war !
Now must your noble anger blaze out
more
Than when from Sobieski, clan by
clan,
The Moslem myriads fell, and fled
before—
Than when Zamoysky smote the
Tatar Khan ;
Than earlier, when on the Baltic
shore
Boleslas drove the Pomeranian.

SONNET

ON THE RESULT OF THE LATE RUSSIAN
INVASION OF POLAND

How long, O God, shall men be
ridden down,
And trampled under by the last and
least
Of men ? The heart of Poland hath
not ceased
To quiver, though her sacred blood
doth drown
The fields ; and out of every smoul-
dering town
Cries to Thee, lest brute Power be
increased,
Till that o'ergrown Barbarian in the
East
Transgress his ample bound to some
new crown :—
Cries to Thee, " Lord, how long shall
these things be ?
How long shall the icy-hearted Musco-
vite
Oppress the region ? " Us, O Just
and Good,
Forgive, who smiled when she was
torn in three ;
Us, who stand *now*, when we should
aid the right—
A matter to be wept with tears of
blood !

SONNET

As when with downcast eyes we muse
and brood,
And ebb into a former life, or seem

To lapse far back in a confused
dream
To states of mystical similitude ;
If one but speaks or hems or stirs
his chair,
Ever the wonder waxeth more and
more,
So that we say, " All this hath been
before,
All this *hath* been, I know not when
or where."
So, friend, when first I looked upon
your face,
Our thought gave answer, each to
each, so true,
Opposed mirrors each reflecting
each—
Altho' I knew not in what time or
place,
Methought that I had often met with
you,
And each had lived in the other's
mind and speech.

O DARLING ROOM

I

O DARLING room, my heart's delight,
Dear room, the apple of my sight,
With thy two couches soft and
white,
There is no room so exquisite,
No little room so warm and bright
Wherein to read, wherein to write.

II

For I the Nonnenwerth have seen,
And Oberwinter's vineyards green,
Musical Lurlei ; and between
The hills to Bingen have I been,
Bingen in Darmstadt, where the
Rhene
Curves toward Mentz, a woody scene.

III

Yet never did there meet my sight,
In any town, to left or right,
A little room so exquisite,
With two such couches, soft and
white ;
Not any room so warm and bright,
Wherein to read, wherein to write.

TO CHRISTOPHER NORTH
 You did late review my lays,
 Crusty Christopher ;
 You did mingle blame and praise,
 Rusty Christopher.

When I learnt from whom it came,
 I forgave you all the blame,
 Musty Christopher ;
 I could *not* forgive the praise,
 Fusty Christopher.

POEMS

(1842)

TO THE QUEEN
 REVERED, beloved—O you that hold
 A nobler office upon earth
 Than arms, or power of brain, or
 birth
 Could give the warrior kings of old,
 Victoria,—since your Royal grace
 To one of less desert allows
 This laurel greener from the brows
 Of him that utter'd nothing base ;

And should your greatness, and the
 care
 That yokes with empire, yield you
 time
 To make demand of modern rhyme
 If aught of ancient worth be there ;

Then—while a sweeter music wakes,
 And thro' wild March the throstle
 calls,
 Where all about your palace-walls
 The sun-lit almond-blossom shakes—

Take, Madam, this poor book of song ;
 For tho' the faults were thick as
 dust

In vacant chambers, I could trust
 Your kindness. May you rule us
 long,

And leave us rulers of your blood
 As noble till the latest day !
 May children of our children say,
 "She wrought her people lasting
 good ;

"Her court was pure ; her life serene ;
 God gave her peace ; her land
 reposed ;
 A thousand claims to reverence
 closed
 In her as Mother, Wife and Queen ;

" And statesmen at her council met
 Who knew the seasons when to take
 Occasion by the hand, and make
 The bounds of freedom wider yet

" By shaping some august decree,
 Which kept her throne unshaken
 still,
 Broad-based upon her people's will,
 And compass'd by the inviolate sea."

CLARIBEL

A MELODY

WHERE Claribel low-lieth
 The breezes pause and dic,
 Letting the rose-leaves fall :
 But the solemn oak-tree sigheth,
 Thick-leaved, ambrosial,
 With an ancient melody
 Of an inward agony,
 Where Claribel low-lieth.

II

At eve the beetle boometh
 Athwart the thicket lone ;
 At noon the wild bee hummeth
 About the moss'd headstone :
 At midnight the moon cometh,
 And looketh down alone.
 Her song the lintwhite swelleth,
 The clear-voiced mavis dwelleth,
 The callow throstle lispeth,
 The slumbrous wave outwelleth,
 The babbling runnel crispeth,
 The hollow grot replieth
 Where Claribel low-lieth.

LILIAN—ISABEL

LILIAN

I

Airy, fairy Lilian,
 Flitting, fairy Lilian,
 When I ask her if she love me,
 Claps her tiny hands above me,
 Laughing all she can ;
 She'll not tell me if she love me,
 Cruel little Lilian.

When my passion seeks
 Pleasance in love-sighs
 She, looking thro' and thro' me
 Thoroughly to undo me,
 Smiling, never speaks :
 So innocent-arch, so cunning-simple,
 From beneath her gather'd wimple
 Glancing with black-beaded eyes,
 Till the lightning laughers dimple
 The baby-roses in her cheeks ;
 Then away she flies.

Prythee weep, May Lilian !
 Gaiety without eclipse
 Wearieth me, May Lilian :
 Thro' my very heart it thrilleth
 When from crimson-threaded lips
 Silver-treble laughter trilleth :
 Prythee weep, May Lilian.

IV

Praying all I can,
 If prayers will not hush thee,
 Airy Lilian,
 Like a rose-leaf I will crush thee,
 Fairy Lilian.

ISABEL

I

Eyes not down-dropt nor over-
 bright, but fed
 With the clear-pointed flame of
 chastity,
 Clear, without heat, undying,
 tended by
 Pure vestal thoughts in the
 translucent fane
 Of her still spirit ; locks not wide-
 dicpread,
 Madonna-wise on either side her
 head ;

Sweet lips whereon perpetually
 did reign

The summer calm of golden charity,
 Were fixed shadows of thy fixed
 mood,

Revered Isabel, the crown and
 head,

The stately flower of female fortitude,
 Of perfect wifehood and pure
 lowlihead.

The intuitive decision of a bright
 And thorough-edged intellect to
 part

Error from crime ; a prudence to
 withhold ;

The laws of marriage charac-
 ter'd in gold

Upon the blanched tablets of her
 heart ;

A love still burning upward, giving
 light

To read those laws ; an accent very
 low

In blandishment, but a most silver
 flow

Of subtle-paced counsel in dis-
 tress,

Right to the heart and brain, tho'
 undescried,

Winning its way with extreme
 gentleness

Thro' all the outworks of suspicious
 pride ;

A courage to endure and to obey ;
 A hate of gossip parlance, and of
 sway,

Crown'd Isabel, thro' all her placid
 life,

The queen of marriage, a most per-
 fect wife.

The mellow'd reflex of a winter
 moon ;

A clear stream flowing with a muddy
 one,

Till in its onward current it
 absorbs

With swifter movement and in
 purer light

The vexed eddies of its way-
 ward brother :

A leaning and upbearing parasite,
 Clothing the stem, which else
 had fallen quite,
 With cluster'd flower-bells and
 ambrosial orbs
 Of rich fruit-bunches leaning
 on each other—
 Shadow forth thee :—the
 world hath not another
 (Though all her fairest forms are
 types of thee,
 And thou of God in thy great
 charity)
 Of such a finish'd chasten'd purity.

MARIANA

"Mariana in the moated grange."—*Measure
 for Measure*.

With blackest moss the flower-plots
 Were thickly crusted, one and all :
 The rusted nails fell from the knots
 That held the peach to the garden-
 wall.

The broken sheds look'd sad and
 strange :

Unlifted was the clinking latch ;
 Weeded and worn the ancient
 thatch

Upon the lonely moated grange,
 She only said, " My life is dreary,
 He cometh not," she said ;
 She said, " I am aweary, aweary,
 I would that I were dead ! "

Her tears fell with the dews at even ;
 Her tears fell ere the dews were
 dried ;

She could not look on the sweet
 heaven,

Either at morn or eventide.

After the flitting of the bats,
 When thickest dark did trance the
 sky,

She drew her casement-curtain by,
 And glanced athwart the glooming
 flats.

She only said, " The night is
 dreary,

He cometh not," she said ;

She said, " I am aweary, aweary,
 I would that I were dead ! "

Upon the middle of the night,
 Waking she heard the night-fowl
 crow :

The cock sung out an hour ere light :
 From the dark fen the oxen's low
 Came to her : without hope of change,
 In sleep she seem'd to walk forlorn,
 Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed
 morn

About the lonely moated grange.

She only said, " The day is
 dreary,

He cometh not," she said ;

She said, " I am aweary, aweary,
 I would that I were dead ! "

About a stone-cast from the wall

A sluice with blacken'd waters
 slept,

And o'er it many, round and small,
 The cluster'd marish-mosses crept.

Hard by a poplar shook alway,
 All silver-green with gnarled bark :

For leagues no other tree did mark
 The level waste, the rounding gray.

She only said, " My life is dreary,
 He cometh not," she said ;

She said, " I am aweary, aweary,
 I would that I were dead ! "

And ever when the moon was low,
 And the shrill winds were up and
 away,

In the white curtain, to and fro,
 She saw the gusty shadow sway.

But when the moon was very low,
 And wild winds bound within their
 cell,

The shadow of the poplar fell
 Upon her bed, across her brow.

She only said, " The night is
 dreary,

He cometh not," she said ;

She said, " I am aweary, aweary,
 I would that I were dead ! "

All day within the dreamy house,
 The doors upon their hinges
 creak'd ;

The blue fly sung in the pane ; the
 mouse

Behind the smouldering wainscot
 shriek'd,

Or from the crevice peer'd about.

Old faces glimmer'd thro' the doors,
 Old footsteps trod the upper floors,
 Old voices called her from without.
 She only said, " My life is dreary,
 He cometh not," she said ;
 She said, " I am aweary, aweary,
 I would that I were dead ! "

Nor martyr-flames, nor trenchant
 swords
 Can do away that ancient lie ;
 A gentler death shall falsehood die,
 Shot thro' and thro' with cunning
 words.

III

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,
 The slow clock ticking, and the
 sound
 Which to the wooing wind aloof
 The poplar made, did all confound
 Her sense ; but most she loathed the
 hour
 When the thick-moted sunbeam lay
 Athwart the chambers, and the
 day
 Was sloping toward his western bower.
 Then, said she, " I am very
 dreary,
 He will not come," she said ;
 She wept, " I am aweary,
 aweary,
 Oh God, that I were dead ! "

Weak Truth a-leaning on her crutch,
 Wan, wasted Truth in her utmost
 need,
 Thy kingly intellect shall feed,
 Until she be an athlete bold,
 And weary with a finger's touch
 Those writhed limbs of lightning
 speed ;
 Like that strange angel which of
 old,
 Until the breaking of the light,
 Wrestled with wandering Israel,
 Past Yabbok brook the livelong
 night,
 And heaven's mazed signs stood still
 In the dim tract of Penuel.

MADELINE

TO

CLEAR-HEADED friend, whose joyful
 scorn,
 Edged with sharp laughter, cuts
 atwain
 The knots that tangle human
 creeds,
 The wounding cords that bind and
 strain
 The heart until it bleeds,
 Ray-fringed eyelids of the morn
 Roof not a glance so keen as
 thine :
 If aught of prophecy be mine,
 Thou wilt not live in vain.

Low-cowering shall the Sophist sit ;
 Falsehood shall bare her plaited
 brow :
 Fair-fronted Truth shall droop not
 now
 With shrilling shafts of subtle wit.

THOU art not steep'd in golden
 languors,
 No tranced summer calm is thine,
 Ever varying Madeline.
 Thro' light and shadow thou dost
 range,
 Sudden glances, sweet and strange,
 Delicious spites and darling angers,
 And airy forms of flitting change.

II

Smiling, frowning, evermore,
 Thou art perfect in love-love,
 Revealings deep and clear are thine
 Of wealthy smiles ; but who may
 know
 Whether smile or frown be swifter ?
 Whether smile or frown be sweeter,
 Who may know ?
 Frowns perfect-sweet along the brow
 Light-glooming over eyes divine,
 Like little clouds sun-fringed, are
 thine,
 Ever varying Madeline.

Thy smile and frown are not aloof
 From one another,
 Each to each is dearest brother;
 Hues of the silken sheeny woof
 Momently shot into each other.
 All the mystery is thine;
 Smiling, frowning, evermore,
 Thou art perfect in love-lore,
 Ever varying Madeline.

Twice or thrice his roundelay,
 Twice or thrice his roundelay;
 Alone and warming his five wits,
 The white owl in the belfry sits.

SECOND SONG

TO THE SAME

A subtle, sudden flame,
 By veering passion fann'd,
 About thee breaks and dances;
 When I would kiss thy hand,
 The flush of anger'd shame
 O'erflows thy calmer glances,
 And o'er black brows drops down
 A sudden-curved frown:
 But when I turn away,
 Thou, willing me to stay,
 Wooest not, nor vainly wranglest;
 But, looking fixedly the while,
 All my bounding heart entanglest
 In a golden-netted smile;
 Then in madness and in bliss,
 If my lips should dare to kiss
 Thy taper fingers amorously,
 Again thou blushest angerly;
 And o'er black brows drops down
 A sudden-curved frown.

Thy tuwhits are lull'd I wot,
 Thy tuwhoos of yesternight,
 Which upon the dark afloat,
 So took echo with delight,
 So took echo with delight,
 That her voice untuneful grown,
 Wears all day a fainter tone.

I would mock thy chaunt anew;
 But I cannot mimick it;
 Not a whit of thy tuwhoo,
 Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,
 Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,
 With a lengthen'd loud halloo,
 Tuwhoo, tuwhit, tuwhit, tu-
 whoo-o-o.

 RECOLLECTIONS OF THE
 ARABIAN NIGHTS

SONG.—THE OWL

WHEN cats run home and light is
 come,
 And dew is cold upon the ground,
 And the far-off stream is dumb,
 And the whirring sail goes round,
 And the whirring sail goes round;
 Alone and warming his five wits,
 The white owl in the belfry sits.

When merry milkmaids click the
 latch,
 And rarely smells the new-mown
 hay,
 And the cock hath sung beneath the
 thatch

WHEN the breeze of a joyful dawn
 blew free
 In the silken sail of infancy,
 The tide of time flow'd back with me,
 The forward-flowing tide of time;
 And many a sheeny summer-morn,
 Adown the Tigris I was borne,
 By Bagdat's shrines of fretted gold,
 High-walled gardens green and old;
 True Mussulman was I and sworn,
 For it was in the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Anight my shallop, rustling thro'
 The low and bloomed foliage, drove
 The fragrant, glistening deeps, and
 clove
 The citron-shadows in the blue:
 By garden porches on the brim,
 The costly doors flung open wide,

Gold glittering thro' lamplight dim,
And broider'd sofas on each side :
In sooth it was a goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Often, where clear-stemm'd platans
guard
The outlet, did I turn away
The boat-head down a broad canal
From the main river sluiced, where all
The sloping of the moon-lit sward
Was damask-work, and deep inlay
Of braided blooms unmown, which
crept
Adown to where the water slept.
A goodly place, a goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

A motion from the river won
Ridged the smooth level, bearing on
Myshallop thro' the star-strown calm,
Until another night in night
I enter'd, from the clearer light,
Imbower'd vaults of pillar'd palm,
Imprisoning sweets, which, as they
clomb
Heavenward, were stay'd beneath the
dome
Of hollow boughs.—A goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Still onward ; and the clear canal
Is rounded to as clear a lake.
From the green rivage many a fall
Of diamond rillets musical,
Thro' little crystal arches low
Down from the central fountain's
flow
Fall'n silver-chiming, seem'd to shake
The sparkling flints beneath the prow.
A goodly place, a goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Above thro' many a bowery turn
A walk with vary-colour'd shells
Wander'd engrain'd. On either side
All round about the fragrant marge
From fluted vase, and brazen urn
In order, eastern flowers large,
Some dropping low their crimson bells

Half-closed, and others studded wide
With disks and tiars, fed the time
With odour in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Far off, and where the lemon-grove
In closest coverture upsprung,
The living airs of middle night
Died round the bulbul as he sung ;
Not he : but something which pos-
sess'd
The darkness of the world, delight,
Life, anguish, death, immortal love,
Ceasing not, mingled, unrepres'd,
Apart from place, withholding
time,
But flattering the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Back the garden-bowers and grots
Slumber'd : the golden palms were
ranged
Above, unwoo'd of summer wind :
A sudden splendour from behind
Flush'd all the leaves with rich gold-
green,
And, flowing rapidly between
Their interspaces, counterchanged
The level lake with diamond-plots
Of dark and bright. A lovely time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Dark-blue the deep sphere overhead,
Distinct with vivid stars inlaid,
Grew darker from that under-flame :
So, leaping lightly from the boat,
With silver anchor left afloat,
In marvel whence that glory came
Upon me, as in sleep I sank
In cool soft turf upon the bank,
Entranced with that place and
time,
So worthy of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Thence thro' the garden I was
drawn—
A realm of pleasance, many a mound,
And many a shadow-chequer'd lawn
Full of the city's stilly sound,
And deep myrrh-thickets blowing
round
The stately cedar, tamarisks,

Thick rosaries of scented thorn,
Tall orient shrubs, and obelisks
Graven with emblems of the time
In honour of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

With dazed vision unawares
From the long alley's latticed shade
Emerged, I came upon the great
Pavilion of the Caliphat.
Right to the carven cedarn doors,
Flung inward over spangled floors,
Broad-based flights of marble stairs
Ran up with golden balustrade,
After the fashion of the time,
And humour of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

The fourscore windows all alight
As with the quintessence of flame,
A million tapers flaring bright
From twisted silvers look'd to shame
The hollow-vaulted dark, and
stream'd
Upon the mooned domes aloof
In inmost Bagdat, till there seem'd
Hundreds of crescents on the roof
Of night new-risen, that marvel-
lous time,
To celebrate the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Then stole I up, and trancedly
Gazed on the Persian girl alone,
Serene with argent-lidded eyes
Amorous, and lashes like to rays
Of darkness, and a brow of pearl
Tressed with redolent ebony,
In many a dark delicious curl,
Flowing beneath her rose-hued zone;
The sweetest lady of the time,
Well worthy of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Six columns, three on either side,
Pure silver, underpropt a rich
Throne of the massive ore, from which
Down-droop'd, in many a floating
fold,
Engarlanded and diaper'd
With inwrought flowers, a cloth of
gold.
Thereon, his deep eye laughter-stirr'd |

With merriment of kingly pride,
Sole star of all that place and time,
I saw him—in his golden prime,
THE GOOD HAROUN ALRASCHID !

ODE TO MEMORY

I

Thou who stealest fire,
From the fountains of the past,
To glorify the present; oh, haste,
Visit my low desire !
Strengthen me, enlighten me !
I faint in this obscurity,
Thou dewy dawn of memory.

II

Come not as thou camest of late,
Flinging the gloom of yesternight
On the white day; but robed in
soften'd light
Of orient state.
Whilome thou camest with the morn-
ing mist,
Even as a maid, whose stately brow
The dew-impearled winds of dawn
have kiss'd,
When she, as thou,
Stays on her floating locks the lovely
freight
Of overflowing blooms, and earliest
shoots
Of orient green, giving safe pledge of
fruits,
Which in wintertide shall star
The black earth with brilliance rare.

III

Whilome thou camest with the morn-
ing mist,
And with the evening cloud,
Showering thy gleaned wealth into
my open breast,
(Those peerless flowers which in the
rudest wind
Never grow sere,
When rooted in the garden of the
mind,
Because they are the earliest of the
year).
Nor was the night thy shroud.

In sweet dreams softer than unbroken
rest

Thou leddest by the hand thine infant
Hope.

The eddying of her garments caught
from thee

The light of thy great presence ; and
the cope

Of the half-attain'd futurity,

Tho' deep not fathomless,

Was cloven with the million stars
which tremble

O'er the deep mind of dauntless
infancy.

Small thought was there of life's dis-
tress ;

For sure she deem'd no mist of earth
could dull

Those spirit-thrilling eyes so keen and
beautiful :

Sure she was nigher to heaven's
spheres,

Listening the lordly music flowing
from

The illimitable years.

O strengthen me, enlighten me !

I faint in this obscurity,

Thou dewy dawn of memory.

IV

Come forth I charge thee, arise,
Thou of the many tongues, the myriad
eyes !

Thou comest not with shows of
flaunting vines

Unto mine inner eye,

Divinest Memory !

Thou wert not nursed by the water-
fall

Which ever sounds and shines

A pillar of white light upon the wall
Of purple cliffs, aloof descried :

Come from the woods that belt the
gray hill-side,

The seven elms, the poplars four

That stand beside my father's door,
And chiefly from the brook that loves

To purl o'er matted cress and ribbed
sand,

Or dimple in the dark of rushy
coves,

Drawing into his narrow earthen urn,
In every elbow and turn,

The filter'd tribute of the rough wood-
land.

O ! hither lead thy feet !

Pour round mine ears the livelong
bleat

Of the thick-fleeced sheep from
wattled folds,

Upon the ridged wolds,

When the first matin-song hath
waken'd loud

Over the dark dewy earth forlorn,
What time the amber morn

Forth gushes from beneath a low-
hung cloud.

Large dowries doth the raptured eye
To the young spirit present

When first she is wed ;

And like a bride of old

In triumph led,

With music and sweet showers

Of festal flowers,

Unto the dwelling she must sway,

Well hast thou done, great artist
Memory,

In setting round thy first experi-
ment

With royal frame-work of
wrought gold ;

Needs must thou dearly love thy
first essay,

And foremost in thy various gallery
Place it, where sweetest sunlight

falls

Upon the storied walls ;

For the discovery

And newness of thine art so pleased
thee,

That all which thou hast drawn
fairest

Or boldest since, but lightly
weighs

With thee unto the love thou bearest
The first-born of thy genius. Artist-

like,

Ever retiring thou dost gaze

On the prime labour of thine early
days :

No matter what the sketch might be ;
Whether the high field on the bushless

Pike,

Or even a sand-built ridge

Of heaped hills that mound the sea,

Overblown with murmurs harsh,
 Or even a lowly cottage whence we
 see
 Stretch'd wide and wild the waste
 enormous marsh,
 Where from the frequent bridge,
 Like emblems of infinity,
 The trenched waters run from sky to
 sky ;
 Or a garden bower'd close
 With plaited alleys of the trailing rose,
 Long alleys falling down to twilight
 grots,
 Or opening upon level plots
 Of crowned lilies, standing near
 Purple-spiked lavender :
 Whither in after life retired
 From brawling storms,
 From weary wind,
 With youthful fancy re-inspired,
 We may hold converse with all forms
 Of the many-sided mind,
 And those whom passion hath not
 blinded,
 Subtle-thoughted, myriad-minded.
 My friend, with you to live alone,
 Were how much better than to own
 A crown, a sceptre, and a throne !
 O strengthen me, enlighten me !
 I faint in this obscurity,
 Thou dewy dawn of memory.

SONG

A SPIRIT haunts the year's last hours
 Dwelling amid these yellowing
 bowers :

To himself he talks ;
 For at eventide, listening earnestly,
 At his work you may hear him sob
 and sigh
 In the walks ;
 Earthward he boweth the heavy
 stalks
 Of the mouldering flowers :
 Heavily hangs the broad sunflower
 Over its grave i' the earth so
 chilly ;
 Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
 Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

The air is damp, and hush'd, and
 close,
 As a sick man's room when he taketh
 repose
 An hour before death ;
 My very heart faints and my whole
 soul grieves
 At the moist rich smell of the rotting
 leaves,
 And the breath
 Of the fading edges of box be-
 neath,
 And the year's last rose.
 Heavily hangs the broad sunflower
 Over its grave i' the earth so
 chilly ;
 Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
 Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

ADELINE

MYSTERY of mysteries,
 Faintly smiling Adeline,
 Scarce of earth nor all divine,
 Nor unhappy, nor at rest,
 But beyond expression fair
 With thy floating flaxen hair ;
 Thy rose-lips and full blue eyes
 Take the heart from out my
 breast.
 Wherefore those dim looks of thine
 Shadowy, dreaming Adeline ?

II

Whence that aery bloom of thine,
 Like a lily which the sun
 Looks thro' in his sad decline,
 And a rose-bush leans upon,
 Thou that faintly smilest still,
 As a Naiad in a well,
 Looking at the set of day,
 Or a phantom two hours old
 Of a maiden past away,
 Ere the placid lips be cold ?
 Wherefore those faint smiles of thine,
 Spiritual Adeline ?

A CHARACTER

What hope or fear or joy is thine ?
 Who talketh with thee, Adeline ?
 For sure thou art not all alone :
 Do beating hearts of salient
 springs
 Keep measure with thine own ?
 Hast thou heard the butterflies
 What they say betwixt their
 wings ?
 Or in stillest evenings
 With what voice the violet woos
 To his heart the silver dew ?
 Or when little airs arise,
 How the merry bluebell rings
 To the mosses underneath ?
 Hast thou look'd upon the
 breath
 Of the lilies at sunrise ?
 Wherefore that faint smile of thine,
 Shadowy, dreaming Adeline ?

Some honey-converse feeds thy mind,
 Some spirit of a crimson rose
 In love with thee forgets to close
 His curtains, wasting odorless sighs
 All night long on darkness blind.
 What aileth thee ? whom waitest
 thou

With thy soften'd, shadow'd brow,
 And those dew-lit eyes of thine,
 Thou faint smiler, Adeline ?

Lovest thou the doleful wind
 When thou gazest at the skies ?
 Doth the low-tongued Orient
 Wander from the side of the
 morn,
 Dripping with Sabæan spice
 On thy pillow, lowly bent
 With melodious airs lovelorn,
 Breathing Light against thy face,
 While his locks a-dropping twined
 Round thy neck in subtle ring
 Make a carcanet of rays,
 And ye talk together still,
 In the language wherewith
 Spring
 Letters cowslips on the hill ?
 Hence that look and smile of thine,
 Spiritual Adeline.

With a half-glance upon the sky
 At night he said, " The wanderings
 Of this most intricate Universe
 Teach me the nothingness of things,"
 Yet could not all creation pierce
 Beyond the bottom of his eye.

He spake of beauty : that the dull
 Saw no divinity in grass,
 Life in dead stones, or spirit in air ;
 Then looking as 'twere in a glass,
 He smooth'd his chin and sleek'd his
 hair,
 And said the earth was beautiful.

He spake of virtue : not the gods
 More purely, when they wish to charm
 Pallas and Juno sitting by :
 And with a sweeping of the arm,
 And a lack-lustre dead-blue eye,
 Devolved his rounded periods.

Most delicately hour by hour
 He canvass'd human mysteries,
 And trod on silk, as if the winds
 Blew his own praises in his eyes,
 And stood aloof from other minds
 In impotence of fancied power.

With lips depress'd as he were meek,
 Himself unto himself he sold :
 Upon himself himself did feed :
 Quiet, dispassionate, and cold,
 And other than his form of creed,
 With chisell'd features clear and
 sleek.

THE POET

The poet in a golden clime was born,
 With golden stars above ;
 Dower'd with the hate of hate, the
 scorn of scorn,
 The love of love.

He saw thro' life and death, thro'
 good and ill,
 He saw thro' his own soul.
 The marvel of the everlasting will,
 An open scroll,

Before him lay : with echoing feet he threaded
 The secretest walks of fame :
 The viewless arrows of his thoughts were headed
 And wing'd with flame,
 There was **no** blood upon her maiden robes
 Sunn'd by those orient skies ;
 But round about the circles of the globes
 Of her keen eyes.

Like Indian reeds blown from his silver tongue,
 And of so fierce a flight,
 From Calpe unto Caucasus they sung,
 Filling with light
 And in her raiment's hem was traced
 in flame
 WISDOM, a name to shake
 All evil dreams of power—a sacred name.

And vagrant melodies the winds which bore
 Then earthward till they lit ;
 Then, like the arrow-seeds of the field flower,
 The fruitful wit
 Her words did gather thunder as they ran,
 And as the lightning to the thunder
 Which follows it, riving the spirit of man,
 Making earth wonder,

Cleaving, took root, and springing forth anew
 Where'er they fell, behold,
 Like to the mother plant in semblance, grew
 A flower all gold,
 So was their meaning to her words.
 No sword
 Of wrath her right arm whirl'd,
 But one poor poet's scroll, and with *his* word
 She shook the world.

THE POET'S MIND

I

So many minds did gird their orbs with beams,
 Tho' one did fling the fire.
 Heaven flow'd upon the soul in many dreams
 Of high desire.
 Vex not thou the poet's mind
 With thy shallow wit :
 Vex not thou the poet's mind ;
 For thou canst not fathom it.
 Clear and bright it should be ever,
 Flowing like a crystal river ;
 Bright as light, and clear as wind.

II

Thus truth was multiplied on truth, the world
 Like one great garden show'd,
 And thro' the wreaths of floating dark upcurl'd,
 Rare sunrise flow'd.
 Dark-brow'd sophist, come not anear ;
 All the place is holy ground ;
 Hollow smile and frozen sneer
 Come not here.
 And Freedom rear'd in that august sunrise
 Her beautiful bold brow,
 When rites and forms before his burning eyes
 Melted like snow.
 Holy water will I pour
 Into every spicy flower
 Of the laurel-shrubs that hedge it around.
 The flowers would faint at your cruel cheer.

In your eye there is death,
 There is frost in your breath
 Which would blight the plants.
 Where you stand you cannot hear
 From the groves within
 The wild-bird's din.
 In the heart of the garden the merry
 bird chants,
 It would fall to the ground if you
 came in.
 In the middle leaps a fountain
 Like sheet lightning,
 Ever brightening
 With a low melodious thunder ;
 All day and all night it is ever drawn
 From the brain of the purple
 mountain
 Which stands in the distance
 yonder :
 It springs on a level of bowery lawn,
 And the mountain draws it from
 Heaven above,
 And it sings a song of undying love ;
 And yet, tho' its voice be so clear and
 full,
 You never would hear it ; your ears
 are so dull ;
 So keep where you are : you are foul
 with sin ;
 It would shrink to the earth if you
 came in.

Whither away from the high green
 field, and the happy blossoming
 shore ?
 Day and night to the billow the
 fountain calls ;
 Down shower the gambolling water-
 falls
 From wandering over the lea :
 Out of the live-green heart of the dells
 They freshen the silvery-crimson
 shells,
 And thick with white bells the clover-
 hill swells
 High over the full-toned sea :
 O hither, come hither and furl your
 sails,
 Come hither to me and to me :
 Hither, come hither and frolic and
 play ;
 Here it is only the mew that wails ;
 We will sing to you all the day :
 Mariner, mariner, furl your sails,
 For here are the blissful downs and
 dales,
 And merrily merrily carol the gales,
 And the spangle dances in bight and
 bay,
 And the rainbow forms and flies on
 the land
 Over the islands free ;
 And the rainbow lives in the curve of
 the sand ;
 Hither, come hither and see ;
 And the rainbow hangs on the poising
 wave,
 And sweet is the colour of cove and
 cave,
 And sweet shall your welcome be :
 O hither, come hither, and be our
 lords
 For merry brides are we :
 We will kiss sweet kisses, and speak
 sweet words :
 O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten
 With pleasure and love and jubilee :
 O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten
 When the sharp clear twang of the
 golden chords
 Runs up the ridged sea.
 Who can light on as happy a shore
 All the world o'er, all the world o'er ?
 Whither away ? listen and stay :
 mariner, mariner, fly no more.

THE SEA-FAIRIES

Slow sail'd the weary mariners and
 saw,
 Betwixt the green brink and the
 running foam,
 Sweet faces, rounded arms, and
 bosoms prest
 To little harps of gold ; and while
 they mused,
 Whispering to each other half in
 fear,
 Shril music reach'd them on the
 middle sea.
 Whither away, whither away, whither
 away ? fly no more.

THE DESERTED HOUSE

I

Life and Thought have gone away
Side by side,
Leaving door and windows
wide ;
Careless tenants they !

All within is dark as night :
In the windows is no light ;
And no murmur at the door,
So frequent on its hinge before.

Close the door, the shutters close,
Or thro' the windows we shall see
The nakedness and vacancy
Of the dark deserted house.

IV

Come away : no more of mirth
Is here or merry-making sound.
The house was builded of the earth,
And shall fall again to ground.

Come away : for Life and Thought
Here no longer dwell ;
But in a city glorious—
A great and distant city—have
bought
A mansion incorruptible.
Would they could have stayed
with us !

THE DYING SWAN

I

The plain was grassy, wild and bare,
Wide, wild, and open to the air,
Which had built up everywhere
An under-roof of doleful gray.
With an inner voice the river ran,
Adown it floated a dying swan,
And loudly did lament.
It was the middle of the day.

Ever the weary wind went on,
And took the reed-tops as it
went.

II

Some blue peaks in the distance rose,
And white against the cold-white sky,
Shone out their crowning snow.

One willow over the river wept,
And shook the wave as the wind did
sigh ;

Above in the wind was the swallow,
Chasing itself at its own wild will,
And far thro' the marish green and
still

The tangled water-courses slept,
Shot over with purple, and green, and
yellow.

III

The wild swan's death-hymn took the
soul

Of that waste place with joy
Hidden in sorrow : at first to the ear
The warble was low, and full and
clear ;

And floating about the under-sky,
Prevailing in weakness, the coronach
stole

Sometimes afar, and sometimes
anear ;

But anon her awful jubilant voice,
With a music strange and manifold,
Flow'd forth on a carol free and bold ;
As when a mighty people rejoice
With shawms, and with cymbals, and
harps of gold,

And the tumult of their acclaim is
roll'd

Thro' the open gates of the city afar,
To the shepherd who watcheth the
evening star.

And the creeping mosses and clam-
bering weeds,

And the willow-branches hoar and
dank,

And the wavy swell of the souging
reeds,

And the wave-worn horns of the
echoing bank,

And the silvery marish-flowers that
throng

The desolate creeks and pools among,
Were flooded over with eddying song.

A DIRGE—THE BALLAD OF ORIANA

A DIRGE

Now is done thy long day's work ;
Fold thy palms across thy breast,
Fold thine arms, turn to thy rest.

Let them rave.

Shadows of the silver birk
Sweep the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

Thee nor carketh care nor slander ;
Nothing but the small cold worm
Fretteth thine enshrouded form.

Let them rave.

Light and shadow ever wander
O'er the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

III

Thou wilt not turn upon thy bed ;
Chaunteth not the brooding bee
Sweeter tones than calumny ?

Let them rave.

Thou wilt never raise thine head
From the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

IV

Crocodiles wept tears for thee ;
The woodbine and eglare
Drip sweeter dews than traitor's tear.

Let them rave.

Rain makes music in the tree
O'er the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

Round thee blow, self-pleached deep,
Bramble-roses, faint and pale,
And long purples of the dale.

Let them rave.

These in every shower creep
Thro' the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

VI

The gold-eyed kingcups fine ;
The frail bluebell peereth over

Rare broidry of the purple clover.

Let them rave.

Kings have no such couch as thine,
As the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

VII

Wild words wander here and there ;
God's great gift of speech abused
Makes thy memory confused :

But let them rave.

The balm-cricket carols clear
In the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

LOVE AND DEATH

WHAT time the mighty moon was
gathering light

Love paced the thymy plots of
Paradise,

And all about him roll'd his lustrous
eyes ;

When, turning round a cassia, full in
view

Death, walking all alone beneath a
yew,

And talking to himself, first met his
sight :

" You must begone," said Death,
" these walks are mine."

Love wept and spread his sheeny vans
for flight ;

Yet ere he parted said, " This hour is
thine :

Thou art the shadow of life, and as the
tree

Stands in the sun and shadows all
beneath,

So in the light of great eternity

Life eminent creates the shade of
death ;

The shadow passeth when the tree
shall fall,

But I shall linger for ever over all."

THE BALLAD OF ORIANA

MY heart is wasted with my woe,
Oriana.

There is no rest for me below,
Oriana.

When the long dun wolds are ribb'd
 with snow,
 And loud the Norland whirlwinds
 blow,
 Oriana,
 Alone I wander to and fro,
 Oriana.

Ere the light on dark was growing,
 Oriana,
 At midnight the cock was crowing,
 Oriana :
 Winds were blowing, waters flowing,
 We heard the steeds to battle going,
 Oriana ;
 Aloud the hollow bugle blowing,
 Oriana.

In the yew-wood black as night,
 Oriana,
 Ere I rode into the fight,
 Oriana,
 While blissful tears blinded my sight
 By star-shine and by moonlight,
 Oriana,
 I to thee my troth did plight,
 Oriana.

She stood upon the castle wall,
 Oriana :
 She watch'd my crest among them all,
 Oriana :
 She saw me fight, she heard me call,
 When forth there stept a foeman tall,
 Oriana,
 Atween me and the castle wall,
 Oriana.

The bitter arrow went aside,
 Oriana :
 The false, false arrow went aside,
 Oriana :
 The damned arrow glanced aside,
 And pierced thy heart, my love, my
 bride,
 Oriana !
 Thy heart, my life, my love, my bride,
 Oriana !

Oh ! narrow, narrow was the space,
 Oriana,
 Loud, loud rung out the bugle's brays,

 Oriana.
 Oh ! deathful stabs were dealt apace,
 The battle deepen'd in its place,
 Oriana ;
 But I was down upon my face,
 Oriana.

They should have stabb'd me where
 I lay,
 Oriana !
 How could I rise and come away,
 Oriana ?
 How could I look upon the day ?
 They should have stabb'd me where I
 lay,
 Oriana—
 They should have trod me into clay,
 Oriana.

O breaking heart that will not break,
 Oriana !
 O pale, pale face so sweet and meek,
 Oriana !
 Thou smilest, but thou dost not
 speak,
 And then the tears run down my
 cheek,
 Oriana :
 What wantest thou ? whom dost
 thou seek,
 Oriana ?

I cry aloud : none hear my cries,
 Oriana.
 Thou comest atween me and the
 skies,
 Oriana.
 I feel the tears of blood arise
 Up from my heart unto my eyes,
 Oriana.
 Within thy heart my arrow lies,
 Oriana.

O cursed hand ! O cursed blow !
 Oriana !
 O happy thou that liest low,
 Oriana !
 All night the silence seems to flow
 Beside me in my utter woe,
 Oriana.
 A weary, weary way I go,
 Oriana.

When Norland winds pipe down the
 sea,
 Oriana,
 I walk, I dare not think of thee,
 Oriana.
 Thou liest beneath the greenwood tree,
 I dare not die and come to thee,
 Oriana.
 I hear the roaring of the sea,
 Oriana.

CIRCUMSTANCE

Two children in two neighbour
 villages
 Playing mad pranks along the heathy
 leas ;
 Two strangers meeting at a festival ;
 Two lovers whispering by an orchard
 wall ;
 Two lives bound fast in one with
 golden ease ;
 Two graves grass-green beside a gray
 church-tower,
 Wash'd with still rains and daisy-
 blossomed ;
 Two children in one hamlet born and
 bred ;
 So runs the round of life from hour
 to hour.

THE MERMAN

I

Who would be
 A merman bold,
 Sitting alone,
 Singing alone
 Under the sea,
 With a crown of gold,
 On a throne ?

I would be a merman bold ;
 I would sit and sing the whole of
 the day ;
 I would fill the sea-halls with a
 voice of power ;
 But at night I would roam abroad
 and play
 With the mermaids in and out of the
 rocks,

Dressing their hair with the white
 sea-flower ;
 And holding them back by their
 flowing locks
 I would kiss them often under the
 sea,
 And kiss them again till they
 kiss'd me
 Laughingly, laughingly ;
 And then we would wander away,
 away
 To the pale-green sea-groves
 straight and high,
 Chasing each other merrily.

There would be neither moon nor
 star ;
 But the wave would make music
 above us afar—
 Low thunder and light in the magic
 night—
 Neither moon nor star.
 We would call aloud in the dreamy
 dells,
 Call to each other and whoop and
 cry
 All night, merrily, merrily ;
 They would pelt me with starry
 spangles and shells,
 Laughing and clapping their hands
 between,
 All night, merrily, merrily :
 But I would throw to them back in
 mine
 Turkis and agate and almondine :
 Then leaping out upon them unseen
 I would kiss them often under the
 sea,
 And kiss them again till they
 kiss'd me
 Laughingly, laughingly.
 Oh ! what a happy life were mine
 Under the hollow-hungocean green !
 Soft are the moss-beds under the
 sea ;
 We would live merrily, merrily.

THE MERMAID

I

Who would be
 A mermaid fair

Singing alone,
Combing her hair
Under the sea,
In a golden curl
With a comb of pearl,
On a throne?

I would be a mermaid fair;
I would sing to myself the whole of
the day;
With a comb of pearl I would comb
my hair;
And still as I comb'd I would sing
and say,
"Who is it loves me? who loves not
me?"
I would comb my hair till my ringlets
would fall,
Low adown, low adown,
From under my starry sea-bud
crown
Low adown and around,
And I should look like a fountain of
gold
Springing alone
With a shrill inner sound,
Over the throne
In the midst of the hall;
Till that great sea-snake under the
sea
From his coiled sleeps in the central
deeps
Would slowly trail himself sevenfold
Round the hall where I sate, and look
in at the gate
With his large calm eyes for the love
of me.
And all the mermen under the sea
Would feel their immortality
Die in their hearts for the love of me.

But at night I would wander away,
away,
I would fling on each side my low-
flowing locks,
And lightly vault from the throne
and play
With the mermen in and out of
the rocks;

We would run to and fro, and hide
and seek,
On the broad sea-wolds in the
crimson shells,
Whose silvery spikes are highest
the sea.
But if any came near I would call,
and shriek,
And adown the steep like a wave I
would leap
From the diamond-ledges that jut
from the dells;
For I would not be kiss'd by all who
would list,
Of the bold merry mermen under the
sea;
They would sue me, and woo me, and
flatter me,
In the purple twilights under the sea;
But the king of them all would carry
me,
Woo me, and win me, and marry me,
In the branching jaspers under the
sea;
Then all the dry pied things that be
In the hueless mosses under the sea
Would curl round my silver feet
silently,
All looking up for the love of me.
And if I should carol aloud, from
aloft
All things that are forked, and horned,
and soft
Would lean out from the hollow
sphere of the sea,
All looking down for the love of me.

SONNET TO J. M. K.

My hope and heart is with thee—
thou wilt be
A latter Luther, and a soldier-priest
To scare church-harpies from the
master's feast;
Our dusted velvets have much need
of thee:
Thou art no sabbath-drawler of old
saws,
Distill'd from some worm-canker'd
homily:
But spurr'd at heart with fieriest
energy

To embattail and to wall about thy
 cause
 With iron-worded proof, hating to
 hark
 The humming of the drowsy pulp-
 drone
 Half God's good sabbath, while the
 worn-out clerk
 Brow-beats his desk below. Thou
 from a throne
 Mounted in heaven wilt shoot into
 the dark
 Arrows of lightnings. I will stand
 and mark.

THE LADY OF SHALOTT

PART I

ON either side the river lie
 Long fields of barley and of rye,
 That clothe the wold and meet the
 sky ;
 And thro' the field the road runs by
 To many-tower'd Camelot ;
 And up and down the people go,
 Gazing where the lilies blow
 Round an island there below,
 The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
 Little breezes dusk and shiver
 Thro' the wave that runs for ever
 By the island in the river
 Flowing down to Camelot.
 Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
 Overlook a space of flowers,
 And the silent isle imbowers
 The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,
 Slide the heavy barges trail'd
 By slow horses ; and unhail'd
 The shallop fitteth silken-sail'd
 Skimming down to Camelot :
 But who hath seen her wave her
 hand ?

Or at the casement seen her stand ?
 Or is she known in all the land,
 The Lady of Shalott ?

Only reapers, reaping early
 In among the bearded barley,

Hear a song that echoes cheerly
 From the river winding clearly,
 Down to tower'd Camelot :
 And by the moon the reaper weary,
 Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
 Listening, whispers " 'Tis the fairy
 Lady of Shalott."

PART II

THERE she weaves by night and day
 A magic web with colours gay.
 She has heard a whisper say,
 A curse is on her if she stay
 To look down to Camelot.
 She knows not what the curse may be,
 And so she weaveth steadily,
 And little other care hath she,
 The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear
 That hangs before her all the year,
 Shadows of the world appear.
 There she sees the highway near
 Winding down to Camelot :
 There the river eddy whirls,
 And there the surly village-churls,
 And the red cloaks of market girls,
 Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
 An abbot on an ambling pad,
 Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
 Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
 Goes by to tower'd Camelot ;
 And sometimes thro' the mirror blue
 The knights come riding two and two :
 She hath no loyal knight and true,
 The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
 To weave the mirror's magic sights,
 For often thro' the silent nights
 A funeral, with plumes and lights,
 And music, went to Camelot :
 Or when the moon was overhead,
 Came two young lovers lately wed ;
 " I am half-sick of shadows," said
 The Lady of Shalott.

PART III.

A BOW-SHOT from her bower-caves,
 He rode between the barley-sheaves,

The sun came dazzling thro' the
leaves,

And flamed upon the brazen greaves
Of bold Sir Lancelot.

A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.
The bridle bells rang merrily

As he rode down to Camelot:
And from his blazon'd baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armour rung,
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-
leather,

The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burn'd like one burning flame to-
gether,

As he rode down to Camelot.
As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight
glow'd,

On burnish'd hooves his war-horse
trode;

From underneath his helmet flow'd
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.

From the bank and from the river
He flash'd into the crystal mirror,
"Tirra lirra," by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces thro' the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She look'd down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror crack'd from side to side;
"The curse is come upon me," cried
The Lady of Shalott.

PART IV.

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks com-
plaining,

Heavily the low sky raining
Over tower'd Camelot;

Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse—
Like some bold seer in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance—
With a glassy countenance

Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she
lay;

The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right—
The leaves upon her falling light—
Thro' the noises of the night

She floated down to Camelot:
And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darken'd wholly,
Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.

For ere she reach'd upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot.

Out upon the wharfs they came
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her
name,
The Lady of Shalott.

MARIANA IN THE SOUTH

Who is this ? and what is here ?
 And in the lighted palace near
 Died the sound of royal cheer ;
 And they cross'd themselves for fear,
 All the knights at Camelot :
 But Lancelot mused a little space ;
 He said, " She has a lovely face ;
 God in his mercy lend her grace,
 The Lady of Shalott."

MARIANA IN THE SOUTH

With one black shadow at its feet,
 The house thro' all the level shines,
 Close-latticed to the brooding heat,
 And silent in its dusty vines :
 A faint-blue ridge upon the right,
 An empty river-bed before,
 And shallows on a distant shore,
 In glaring sand and inlets bright.

But " Ave Mary," made she
 moan,
 And " Ave Mary," night and
 morn,
 And " Ah," she sang, " to be all
 alone,
 To live forgotten, and love for-
 lorn."

She, as her carol sadder grew,
 From brow and bosom slowly down
 Thro' rosy taper fingers drew
 Her streaming curls of deepest
 brown
 To left and right, and made appear,
 Still-lighted in a secret shrine.
 Her melancholy eyes divine,
 The home of woe without a tear.
 And " Ave Mary," was her moan,
 " Madonna, sad is night and
 morn ;"
 And " Ah," she sang, " to be all
 alone,
 To live forgotten, and love for-
 lorn."

Till all the crimson changed, and past
 Into deep orange o'er the sea,
 Low on her knees herself she cast,
 Before Our Lady murmur'd she ;
 Complaining, " Mother, give me grace
 To help me of my weary load."
 And on the liquid mirror glow'd
 The clear perfection of her face.

" Is this the form," she made
 her moan,
 " That won his praises night
 and morn ?"
 And " Ah," she said, " but I
 wake alone,
 I sleep forgotten, I wake for-
 lorn."

Nor bird would sing, nor lamb would
 bleat,
 Nor any cloud would cross the
 vault,
 But day increased from heat to
 heat,
 On stony drought and steaming
 salt ;
 Till now at noon she slept again,
 And seem'd knee-deep in mountain
 grass,
 And heard her native breezes pass,
 And runlets babbling down the glen.
 She breathed in sleep a lower
 moan,
 And murmuring, as at night
 and morn,
 She thought, " My spirit is here
 alone,
 Walks forgotten, and is for-
 lorn."

Dreaming, she knew it was a dream :
 She felt he was and was not
 there,
 She woke : the babble of the stream
 Fell, and, without, the steady glare
 Shrank one sick willow sere and
 small.
 The river-bed was dusty-white ;
 And all the furnace of the light
 Struck up against the blinding wall.
 She whisper'd, with a stifled
 moan
 More inward than at night or
 morn,
 " Sweet Mother, let me not here
 alone
 Live forgotten and die forlorn."
 And, rising, from her bosom drew
 Old letters, breathing of her worth,
 For " Love," they said, " must needs
 be true,
 To what is loveliest upon earth."

ELEANORE

41

An image seem'd to pass the door,
 To look at her withslight, and say,
 "But now thy beauty flows
 away,
 So be alone for evermore."
 "O cruel heart," she changed
 her tone
 "And cruel love, whose end
 is scorn,
 Is this the end to be left alone,
 To live forgotten, and die for-
 lorn!"

But sometimes in the falling day
 An image seem'd to pass the door,
 To look into her eyes and say,
 "But thou shalt be alone no
 more."
 And flaming downward over all
 From heat to heat the day de-
 creased,
 And slowly rounded to the east
 The one black shadow from the wall.
 "The day to night," she made
 her moan,
 "The day to night, the night
 to morn,
 And day and night I am left
 alone
 To live forgotten, and love for-
 lorn."

II

At eve a dry cicala sung,
 There came a sound as of the sea;
 Backward the lattice-blind she flung,
 And lean'd upon the balcony.
 There all in spaces rosy-bright
 Large Hesper glitter'd on her tears,
 And deepening thro' the silent
 spheres,
 Heaven over Heaven rose the night.
 And weeping then she made her
 moan,
 "The night comes on that
 knows not morn,
 When I shall cease to be all alone,
 To live forgotten, and love
 forlorn."

Or the yellow-banded bees,
 Thro' half-open lattices
 Coming in the scented breeze,
 Fed thee, a child, lying alone,
 With whitest honey in fairy
 gardens cull'd—
 A glorious child, dreaming alone,
 In silk-soft folds, upon yielding
 down,
 With the hum of swarming bees
 Into dreamful slumber lull'd.

Who may minister to thee?
 Summer herself should minister
 To thee, with fruitage golden-
 rinded
 On golden salvers, or it may be,
 Youngest Autumn, in a bower
 Grape-thicken'd from the light, and
 blinded
 With many a deep-hued bell-like
 flower

ELEANORE

I

Thy dark eyes open'd not,
 Nor first reveal'd themselves to
 English air,

Of fragrant trailers, when the air
Sleepeth over all the heaven,
And the crag that fronts the Even,
All along the shadowing shore,
Crimsons over an inland mere,
Eleñore!

IV

How may full-sail'd verse express,
How may measured words adore
The full-flowing harmony
Of thy swan-like stateliness,
Eleñore?
The luxuriant symmetry
Of thy floating gracefulness,
Eleñore?

Every turn and glance of thine,
Every lineament divine,
Eleñore,

And the steady sunset glow,
That stays upon thee? For in
thee

Is nothing sudden, nothing
single;

Like two streams of incense free
From one censer, in one shrine,
Thought and motion mingle,
Mingle ever. Motions flow
To one another, even as tho'
They were modulated so
To an unheard melody,
Which lives about thee, and a
sweep

Of richest pauses, evermore
Drawn from each other mellow-
deep;

Who may express thee, Eleñ-
nore?

I stand before thee, Eleñore;
I see thy beauty gradually unfold,
Daily and hourly, more and more.

I muse, as in a trance, the while
Slowly, as from a cloud of gold,
Comes out thy deep ambrosial smile.
I muse, as in a trance, whene'er
The languors of thy love-deep eyes
Float on to me. I would I were

So tranced, so rapt in ecstasies,
To stand apart, and to adore,
Gazing on thee for evermore,
Serene, imperial Eleñore!

VI

Sometimes, with most intensity
Gazing, I seem to see
Thought folded over thought, smiling
asleep,
Slowly awaken'd, grow so full and
deep

In thy large eyes, that, overpower'd
quite,

I cannot veil, or droop my sight,
But am as nothing in its light:
As tho' a star, in inmost heaven set,
Ev'n while we gaze on it,
Should slowly round his orb, and
slowly grow

To a full face, there like a sun remain
Fix'd—then as slowly fade again,
And draw itself to what it was
before;

So full, so deep, so slow,
Thought seems to come and go
In thy large eyes, imperial Eleñore

VII

As thunder-clouds that, hung on high,
Roof'd the world with doubt and
fear,

Floating thro' an evening atmosphere,
Grow golden all about the sky;
In thee all passion becomes passion-
less,

Touch'd by thy spirit's mellowness,
Losing his fire and active might

In a silent meditation,
Falling into a still delight,
And luxury of contemplation:

As waves that up a quiet cove
Rolling slide, and lying still

Shadow forth the banks at will:

Or sometimes they swell and move,
Pressing up against the land,
With motions of the outer sea:
And the self-same influence
Controlleth all the soul and sense
Of Passion gazing upon thee.

His bow-string slacken'd, languid
Love,

Leaning his cheek upon his hand,
Droops both his wings, regarding
thee,

And so would languish evermore.
Serene, imperial Eleñore.

VIII

But when I see thee roam, with
tresses unconfined,
While the amorous, odorous wind
Breathes low between the sunset
and the moon;
Or, in a shadowy saloon,
On silken cushions half reclined;
I watch thy grace; and in its
place
My heart a charmed slumber keeps
While I muse upon thy face;
And a languid fire creeps
Thro' all my veins to my frame
Dissolvingly and slowly: soon
From thy rose-red lips my
name
Floweth; and then, as in a swoon,
With dinning sound my ears are
rife,
My tremulous tongue faltereth,
I lose my colour, I lose my
breath,
I drink the cup of a costly death,
Brimm'd with delirious draughts of
warmest life.
I die with my delight, before
I hear what I would hear from
thee;
Yet tell my name again to me,
I *would* be dying evermore.
So dying ever, Eleânore.

THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER

I SEE the wealthy miller yet,
His double chin, his portly size,
And who that knew him could forget
The busy wrinkles round his eyes?
The slow wise smile that, round about
His dusty forehead drily curl'd,
Seem'd half-within and half-without,
And full of dealings with the world?
In yonder chair I see him sit,
Three fingers round the old silver
cup—
I see his gray eyes twinkle yet
At his own jest—gray eyes lit up
With summer lightnings of a soul
So full of summer warmth, so glad,

So healthy, sound, and clear and
whole,
His memory scarce can make me
sad.

Yet fill my glass: give me one kiss:
My own sweet Alice, we must die.
There's somewhat in this world amiss
Shall be unriddled by and by.
There's somewhat flows to us in life,
But more is taken quite away.
Pray, Alice, pray, my darling wife,
That we may die the self-same day.

Have I not found a happy earth?
I least should breathe a thought of
pain.

Would God renew me from my birth
I'd almost live my life again.
So sweet it seems with thee to walk,
And once again to woo thee mine—
It seems in after-dinner talk
Across the walnuts and the wine—

To be the long and listless boy
Late-left an orphan of the squire,
Where this old mansion mounted
high

Looks down upon the village spire:
For even here, where I and you
Have lived and loved alone so long,
Each morn my sleep was broken thro'
By some wild skylark's matin song.

And oft I heard the tender dove
In firry woodlands making moan;
But ere I saw your cyes, my love,
I had no motion of my own.
For scarce my life with fancy play'd
Before I dream'd that pleasant
dream—

Still hither thither idly sway'd
Like those long mosses in the
stream.

Or from the bridge I lean'd to hear
The milldam rushing down with
noise,

And see the minnows everywhere
In crystal oddies glance and poise,
The tall flag-flowers when they sprung
Below the range of stepping-stones,
Or those three chestnuts near, that
hung
In masses thick with milky cones.

But, Alice, what an hour was that,
 When after roving in the woods
 ('Twas April then), I came and sat
 Below the chestnuts, when their
 buds
 Were glistening to the breezy blue ;
 And on the slope, an absent fool,
 I cast me down, nor thought of you,
 But angled in the higher pool.

A love-song I had somewhere read,
 An echo from a measured strain,
 Beat time to nothing in my head
 From some odd corner of the brain.
 It haunted me, the morning long,
 With weary sameness in the rhymes,
 The phantom of a silent song,
 That went and came a thousand
 times.

Then leapt a trout. In lazy mood
 I watch'd the little circles die ;
 They past into the level flood,
 And there a vision caught my eye ;
 The reflex of a beauteous form,
 A glowing arm, a gleaming neck,
 As when a sunbeam wavers warm
 Within the dark and dimpled beck.

For you remember, you had set,
 That morning, on the casement's
 edge
 A long green box of mignonette,
 And you were leaning from the
 ledge :
 And when I raised my eyes, above
 They met with two so full and
 bright—
 Such eyes ! I swear to you, my love,
 That these have never lost their
 sight.

I loved, and love dispell'd the fear
 That I should die an early death :
 For love possess'd the atmosphere,
 And fill'd the breast with purer
 breath.
 My mother thought, What ails the
 boy ?

For I was alter'd, and began
 To move about the house with joy,
 And with the certain step of man.

I loved the brimming wave that swam
 Thro' quiet meadows round the mill,
 The sleepy pool above the dam,
 The pool beneath it never still,
 The meal-sacks on the whiten'd
 floor,
 The dark round of the dripping
 wheel,
 The very air about the door :
 Made misty with the floating meal.

And oft in ramblings on the wold,
 When April nights began to blow,
 And April's crescent glimmer'd cold,
 I saw the village lights below ;
 I knew your taper far away,
 And full at heart of trembling hope,
 From off the wold I came, and lay
 Upon the freshly-flower'd slope.

The deep brook groan'd beneath the
 mill ;
 And "by that lamp," I thought,
 "she sits !"
 The white chalk-quarry from the hill
 Gleam'd to the flying moon by fits.
 "O that I were beside her now !
 O will she answer if I call ?
 O would she give me vow for vow,
 Sweet Alice, if I told her all ?"

Sometimes I saw you sit and spin ;
 And, in the pauses of the wind,
 Sometimes I heard you sing within ;
 Sometimes your shadow cross'd the
 blind.
 At last you rose and moved the light,
 And the long shadow of the chair
 Flitted across into the night,
 And all the casement darken'd
 there.

But when at last I dared to speak,
 The lanes, you know, were white
 with may,
 Your ripe lips moved not, but your
 cheek
 Flush'd like the coming of the day ;
 And so it was—half-sly, half-shy,
 You would, and would not, little
 one !
 Although I pleaded tenderly,
 And you and I were all alone.

And slowly was my mother brought
To yield consent to my desire :
She wish'd me happy, but she
thought

I might have look'd a little higher ;
And I was young—too young to wed ;
" Yet must I love her for your sake ;
Go fetch your Alice here," she said :
Her eyelid quiver'd as she spake.

And down I went to fetch my bride :
But, Alice, you were ill at ease ;
This dress and that by turns you
tried,
Too fearful that you should not
please.

I loved you better for your fears,
I knew you could not look but well ;
And drew, that would have fall'n in
tears,

I kiss'd away before they fell.

I watch'd the little flutterings,
The doubt my mother would not
see ;

She spoke at large of many things,
And at the last she spoke of me ;
And turning look'd upon your face,
As near this door you sat apart,
And rose, and, with a silent grace
Approaching, press'd you heart to
heart.

Ah, well—but sing the foolish song
I gave you, Alice, on the day
When, arm in arm, we went along,
A pensive pair, and you were gay
With bridal flowers—that I may seem,
As in the nights of old, to lie
Beside the mill-wheel in the stream,
While those full chestnuts whisper
by.

It is the miller's daughter,
And she is grown so dear, so dear,
That I would be the jewel
That trembles at her ear :
For hid in ringlets day and night,
I'd touch her neck so warm and
white.

And I would be the girdle
About her dainty dainty waist,
And her heart would beat against me
In sorrow and in rest :
And I should know if it beat right,
I'd clasp it round so close and tight.

And I would be the necklace,
And all day long to fall and rise
Upon her balmy bosom,
With her laughter or her sighs,
And I would lie so light, so light,
I scarce should be unclasp'd at night.

A trifle, sweet! which true love
spells—

True love interprets—right alone.
His light upon the letter dwells,
For all the spirit is his own.

So, if I waste words now, in truth
You must blame Love. His early
rage
Had force to make me rhyme in
youth,
And makes me talk too much in
age.

And now those vivid hours are gone,
Like mine own life to me thou art,
Where Past and Present, wound in
one,

Do make a garland for the heart :
So sing that other song I made,
Half-anger'd with my happy lot,
The day, when in the chestnut shade
I found the blue Forget-me-not.

Love that hath us in the net,
Can he pass, and we forget ?
Many suns arise and set.
Many a chance the years beget.
Love the gift is Love the debt.

Even so,
Love is hurt with jar and fret.
Love is made a vague regret.
Eyes with idle tears are wet.
Idle habit links us yet.
What is love ? for we forget :
Ah, no ! no !

Look thro' mine eyes with thine.
True wife,

Round my true heart thine arms
entwine ;

My other dearer life in life,
Look thro' my very soul with
thine !

Untouch'd with any shade of years,
May those kind eyes for ever dwell !
They have not shed a many tears,
Dear eyes, since first I knew them
well.

Yet tears they shed : they had their ^{part} from my swift blood that went and came

Of sorrow : for when time was ripe,
The still affection of the heart
Became an outward breathing type,
That into stillness past again,
And left a want unknown before ;
Although the loss that brought us
pain,

That loss but made us love the more,
My lips, as sunlight drinketh dew.

With farther lookings on. The kiss,
The woven arms, seem but to be
Weak symbols of the settled bliss,
The comfort, I have found in thee :
But that God bless thee, dear—who
wrought

Two spirits to one equal mind
With blessings beyond hope or
thought,
Faints like a dazzled morning
moon.

With blessings which no words can
find.

Arise, and let us wander forth,
To yon old mill across the wolds ;
For look, the sunset, south and north
Winds all the vale in rosy folds,
And fires your narrow casement glass
Touching the sullen pool below :
On the chalk-hill the bearded grass
Is dry and dewless. Let us go.

FATIMA

O LOVE, Love, Love ! O withering
might !

O sun, that from thy noonday height
Shudderest when I strain my sight,
Throbbing thro' all thy heat and light,
Lo, falling from my constant mind,
Lo, parch'd and wither'd, dead and
blind,

I whirl like leaves in roaring wind

Last night I wasted hateful hours
Below the city's eastern towers :
I thirsted for the brooks, the showers
I roll'd among the tender flowers :
I crush'd them on my breast, my
mouth :

I look'd athwart the burning drought
Of that long desert to the south

Last night, when some one spoke his
name,

from my swift blood that went and came

A thousand little shafts of flame
Were shiver'd in my narrow frame.
O Love, O fire ! once he drew
With one long kiss my whole soul
thro'

My lips, as sunlight drinketh dew.

Before he mounts the hill, I know
He cometh quickly : from below
Sweet gales, as from deep gardens,
blow

Before him, striking on my brow,
In my dry brain my spirit soon,
Down-deepening from swoon to
swoon,

Faints like a dazzled morning
moon.

The wind sounds like a silver wire,
And from beyond the moon a fire
Is pour'd upon the hills, and nigher
The skies stoop down in their desire ;
And, isled in sudden seas of light,
My heart, pierced thro' with fierce
delight,
Bursts into blossom in his sight.

My whole soul waiting silently,
All naked in a sultry sky,
Droops blinded with his shining eyes ;
I will possess him or will die.
I will grow round him in his place,
Grow, live, die looking on his face,
Die, dying clasp'd in his embrace.

GENONE

THERE lies a vale in Ida, lovelier
Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.
The swimming vapour slopes athwart
the glen,

Puts forth an arm, and creeps from
pine to pine,
And loiters, slowly drawn. On either
hand

The lawns and meadow-ledges mid-
way down

Hang rich in flowers, and far below
them roars

The long brook falling thro' the
clov'n ravine

In cataract after cataract to the sea.
Behind the valley topmost Gargarus
Stands up and takes the morning :
but in front

The gorges, opening wide apart,
reveal

Troas and Ilion's column'd citadel,
The crown of Troas.

Hither came at noon
Mournful Ænone, wandering forlorn
Of Paris, once her playmate on the
hills.

Her cheek had lost the rose, and
round her neck

Floated her hair or seem'd to float in
rest,

She, leaning on a fragment twined
with vine,

Sang to the stillness, till the moun-
tain-shade

Sloped downward to her seat from the
upper cliff.

" O mother Ida, many-fountain'd
Ida,

Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
For now the noonday quiet holds the
hill :

The grasshopper is silent in the grass :
The lizard, with his shadow on the
stone,

Rests like a shadow, and the cicada
sleeps.

The purple flowers droop : the golden
bee

Is lily-cradled : I alone awake.

My eyes are full of tears, my heart of
love,

My heart is breaking, and my eyes
are dim,

And I am all aweary of my life.

" O mother Ida, many-fountain'd
Ida,

Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Hear me O Earth, hear me O Hills,
O Caves

That house the cold crown'd snake |
O mountain brooks,

I am the daughter of a River-God,
Hear me, for I will speak, and build
up all

My sorrow with my song, as yonder
walls

Rose slowly to a music slowly
breathed,

A cloud that gather'd shape : for it
may be

That, while I speak of it, a little while
My heart may wander from its deeper

" O mother Ida, many-fountain'd
Ida,

Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
I waited underneath the dawning hills,

Aloft the mountain lawn was dewy-
dark,

And dewy-dark aloft the mountain
pine :

Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,
Leading a jet-black goat white-horn'd,
white-hooved,

Came up from reedy Simois all alone.

" O mother Ida, harken ere I die.

Far-off the torrent call'd me from the
cleft :

Far up the solitary morning smote
The streaks of virgin snow. With
down-dropt eyes

I sat alone : white-breasted like a star
Fronting the dawn he moved ; a leo-
pard skin

Droop'd from his shoulder, but his
sunny hair

Cluster'd about his temples like a
God's ;

And his cheek brighten'd as the foam-
bow brightens

When the wind brows the foam, and
all my heart

Went forth to embrace him coming
ere he came.

" Dear mother Ida, harken ere I
die.

He smiled, and opening out his milk-
white palm

Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian
gold,

That smelt ambrosially, and while I
look'd

And listen'd, the full-flowing river of
speech

| Came down upon my heart.

" ' My own Cenone, And overhead the wandering ivy
 Beautiful-brow'd Cenone, my own and vine,
 soul, This way and that, in many a wild
 Behold this fruit, whose gleaming festoon
 rind ingrav'n Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled
 " For the most fair," would seem to boughs
 award it thine, With bunch and berry and flower
 As lovelier than whatever Oread thro' and thro'.
 haunt
 The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace
 Of movement, and the charm of
 married brows.'

" Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 He prest the blossom of his lips to mine,
 And added ' This was cast upon the board,
 When all the full-faced presence of the Gods
 Ranged in the halls of Peleus ; where-upon
 Rose feud, with question unto whom
 'twere due :
 But light-foot Iris brought it yester-eve,
 Delivering, that to me, by common voice
 Elected umpire, Herè comes to-day,
 Pallas and Aphrodite, claiming each
 This meed of fairest. Thou, within the cave
 Behind yon whispering tuft of oldest pine,
 Mayst well behold them unbeheld, unheard
 Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of Gods.'

" Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 It was the deep midnoon : one silvery cloud
 Had lost his way between the piney sides
 Of this long glen. Then to the bower they came,
 Naked they came to that smooth-swarded bower,
 And at their feet the crocus brake like fire,
 Violet, amaracus, and asphodel,
 Lotos and lilies : and a wind arose,

And overhead the wandering ivy
 and vine,
 This way and that, in many a wild
 festoon
 Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled
 boughs
 With bunch and berry and flower
 thro' and thro'.

" O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit,
 And o'er him flow'd a golden cloud,
 and lean'd
 Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant dew.
 Then first I heard the voice of her,
 to whom
 Coming thro' Heaven, like a light
 that grows
 Larger and clearer, with one mind
 the Gods
 Rise up for reverence. She to Paris
 made
 Proffer of royal power, ample rule
 Unquestion'd, overflowing revenue
 Wherewith to embellish state, ' from
 many a vale
 And river-sunder'd champaign
 clothed with corn,
 Or labour'd mines undrainable of ore,
 Honour,' she said, ' and homage, tax
 and toll,
 From many an inland town and
 haven large,
 Mast-throng'd beneath her shadow-
 ing citadel
 In glassy bays among her tallest
 towers.'

" O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 Still she spake on and still she spake
 of power,
 ' Which in all action is the end of all ;
 Power fitted to the season ; wisdom-
 bred
 And throned of wisdom—from all
 neighbour crowns
 Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand
 Fail from the sceptre-staff. Such
 boon from me,
 From me, Heaven's Queen, Paris,
 to thee king-born,
 A shepherd all thy life but yet king-
 born,

Should come most welcome, seeing
men, in power
Only, are likest gods, who have
attain'd
Rest in a happy place and quiet seats
Above the thunder, with undying
bliss
In knowledge of their own supremacy.'

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I
die.
She ceased, and Paris held the costly
fruit
Out at arm's-length, so much the
thought of power
Flatter'd his spirit; but Pallas where
she stood
Somewhat apart, her clear and bared
limbs
O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed
spear
Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold,
The while, above, her full and earnest
eye
Over her snow-cold breast and angry
cheek
Kept watch, waiting decision, made
reply.

"Self-reverence, self-knowledge,
self-control,
These three alone lead life to sovereign
power.
Yet not for power, (power of herself
Would come uncalled for) but to live
by law,
Acting the law we live by without
fear;
And, because right is right, to follow
right
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence.'

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I
die,
Again she said: 'I woo thee not with
gifts.
Sequel of guerdon could not alter me
To fairer. Judge thou me by what I
am,
So shalt thou find me fairest.

Yet, indeed,
If gazing on divinity disrobed
Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of
fair,
Unbiass'd by self-profit, oh! rest
thce sure
That I shall love thee well and cleave
to thee,
So that my vigour, wedded to thy
blood,
Shall strike within thy pulses, like a
God's,
To push thee forward thro' a life of
shocks,
Dangers, and deeds, until endurance
grow
Sinew'd with action, and the full-
grown will,
Circled thro' all experiences, pure
law,
Commeasure perfect freedom.'

"Here she ceased,
And Paris ponder'd, and I cried, 'O
Paris,
Give it to Pallas!' but he heard me
not,
Or hearing would not hear me, woe is

"O mother Ida, many-fountain'd
Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Idalian Aphrodite beautiful,
Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in
Paphian wells,
With rosy slender fingers backward
drew
From her warm brows and bosom her
deep hair
Ambrosial, golden round her lucid
throat
And shoulder: from the violets her
light foot
Shone rosy-white, and o'er her
rounded form
Between the shadows of the vine-
bunches
Floated the glowing sunlights, as she
moved.

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I
die.
She with a subtle smile in her mild
eyes,

The herald of her triumph, drawing
 nigh
 Half-whisper'd in his ear, 'I promise
 thee
 The fairest and most loving wife in
 Greece.'
 She spoke and laugh'd: I shut my
 sight for fear:
 But when I look'd, Paris had raised
 his arm,
 And I beheld great Here's angry eyes,
 As she withdrew into the golden cloud,
 And I was left alone within the
 bower;
 And from that time to this I am alone,
 And I shall be alone until I die.

"Yet, mother Ida, harken ere I
 die.
 Fairest—why fairest wife? am I not
 fair?
 My love hath told me so a thousand
 times.
 Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,
 When I past by, a wild and wanton
 pard,
 Eyed like the evening star, with play-
 ful tail
 Crouch'd fawning in the weed. Most
 loving is she?
 Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that
 my arms
 Were wound about thee, and my hot
 lips prest
 Close, close to thine in that quick-
 falling dew.
 Of fruitful kisses, thick as Autumn
 rains
 Flash in the pools of whirling Simois.

"O mother, hear me yet before I
 die.
 They came, they cut away my tallest
 pines,
 My dark tall pines, that plumed the
 craggy ledge
 High over the blue gorge, and all
 between
 The snowy peak and snow-white
 cataract
 Foster'd the callow eaglet—from
 beneath
 Whose thick mysterious boughs in the
 dark morn

The panther's roar came muffled,
 while I sat
 Low in the valley. Never, never
 more
 Shall lone Cenone see the morning mist
 Sweep thro' them; never see them
 overlaid
 With narrow moon-lit slips of silver
 cloud,
 Between the loud stream and the
 trembling stars.

"O mother, hear me yet before I
 die.
 I wish that somewhere in the ruin'd
 folds,
 Among the fragments tumbled from
 the glens,
 Or the dry thickets, I could meet
 with her,
 The Abominable, that uninvited came
 Into the fair Peleian banquet-hall,
 And cast the golden fruit upon the
 board,
 And bred this change; that I might
 speak my mind,
 And tell her to her face how much I
 hate
 Her presence, hated both of Gods
 and men.

"O mother, hear me yet before I
 die.
 Hath he not sworn his love a thousand
 times,
 In this green valley, under this green
 hill,
 Ev'n on this hand, and sitting on this
 stone?
 Seal'd it with kisses? water'd it with
 tears?
 O happy tears, and how unlike to
 these!
 O happy Heaven, how canst thou see
 my face?
 O happy earth, how canst thou bear
 my weight?
 O death, death, death, thou ever-
 floating cloud,
 There are enough unhappy on this
 earth,
 Pass by the happy souls, that love to
 live:

I pray thee, pass before my light of
 life,
 And shadow all my soul, that I may
 die.
 Thou weighest heavy on the heart
 within,
 Weigh heavy on my eyelids let me
 die.

"O mother, hear me yet before I
 die.
 I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts
 Do shape themselves within me, more
 and more,
 Whereof I catch the issue, as I hear
 Dead sounds at night come from the
 inmost hills,
 Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly
 see
 My far-off doubtful purpose, as a
 mother
 Conjectures of the features of her
 child
 Ere it is born : her child !—a shudder
 comes
 Across me : never child be born of me,
 Unblest, to vex me with his father's
 eyes !

"O mother, hear me yet before I
 die.
 Hear me, O earth. I will not die
 alone,
 Lest their shrill happy laughter come
 to me
 Walking the cold and starless road of
 Death
 Uncomforted, leaving my ancient
 love
 With the Greek woman. I will rise
 and go
 Down into Troy, and ere the stars
 come forth
 Talk with the wild Cassandra, for she
 says
 A fire dances before her, and a sound
 Rings ever in her ears of armed men.
 What this may be I know not, but I
 know
 That, wheresoe'er I am by night and
 day,
 All earth and air seem only burning
 fire."

THE SISTERS

We were two daughters of one race :
 She was the fairest in the face :
 The wind is blowing in turret and
 tree.
 They were together, and she fell ;
 Therefore revenge became me well.
 O the Earl was fair to see !

She died : she went to burning flame :
 She mix'd her ancient blood with
 shame.
 The wind is howling in turret and
 tree.
 Whole weeks and months, and early
 and late,
 To win his love I lay in wait :
 O the Earl was fair to see !

I made a feast ; I bad him come ;
 I won his love, I brought him home.
 The wind is roaring in turret and
 tree.
 And after supper, on a bed,
 Upon my lap he laid his head :
 O the Earl was fair to see !

I kiss'd his eyelids into rest :
 His ruddy cheek upon my breast.
 The wind is raging in turret and
 tree.
 I hated him with the hate of hell,
 But I loved his beauty passing well.
 O the Earl was fair to see !

I rose up in the silent night :
 I made my dagger sharp and bright.
 The wind is raving in turret and
 tree.
 As half-asleep his breath he drew,
 Three times I stabb'd him thro' and
 thro'.
 O the Earl was fair to see !

I curl'd and comb'd his comely head,
 He look'd so grand when he was dead.
 The wind is blowing in turret and
 tree.
 I wrapt his body in the sheet,
 And laid him at his mother's feet
 O the Earl was fair to see !

THE PALACE OF ART

TO

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM

I SEND you here a sort of allegory,
 (For you will understand it) of a soul,
 A sinful soul possess'd of many gifts,
 A spacious garden full of flowering
 weeds,
 A glorious Devil, large in heart and
 brain,
 That did love Beauty only, (Beauty
 seen
 In all varieties of mould and mind)
 And Knowledge for its beauty ; or
 if Good,
 Good only for its beauty, seeing not
 That Beauty, Good, and Knowledge,
 are three sisters
 That doat upon each other, friends
 to man,
 Living together under the same roof,
 And never can be sunder'd without
 tears.
 And he that shuts Love out, in turn
 shall be
 Shut out from Love, and on her thresh-
 hold lie
 Howling in outer darkness. Not for
 this
 Was common clay ta'en from the
 common earth,
 Moulded by God, and temper'd with
 the tears
 Of angels to the perfect shape of man.

THE PALACE OF ART

I BUILT my soul a lordly pleasure-
 house,
 Wherein at ease for aye to dwell.
 I said, " O Soul, make merry and
 carouse,
 Dear soul, for all is well,"
 A huge crag-platform, smooth as
 burnish'd brass,
 I chose, The ranged ramparts
 bright
 From level meadow-bases of deep
 grass
 Suddenly scaled the light.

Thereon I built it firm. Of ledge or
 shelf
 The rock rose clear, or winding
 stair.

My soul would live alone unto herself
 In her high palace there.

And " while the world runs round and
 round," I said,

" Reign thou apart, a quiet king,
 Still as, while Saturn whirls, his sted-
 fast shade
 Sleeps on his luminous ring."

To which my soul made answer
 readily :

" Trust me, in bliss I shall abide
 In this great mansion, that is built
 for me,
 So royal-rich and wide."

Four courts I made, East, West and
 South and North,
 In each a squared lawn, wherefrom
 The golden gorge of dragons spouted
 forth
 A flood of fountain-foam.

And round the cool green courts there
 ran a row
 Of cloisters, branch'd like mighty
 woods,
 Echoing all night to that sonorous
 flow
 Of spouted fountain-floods.

And round the roofs a gilded gallery
 That lent broad verge to distant
 lands,
 Far as the wild swan wings, to where
 the sky
 Dipt down to sea and sands.

From those four jets four currents in
 one swell
 Across the mountain stream'd
 below
 In misty folds, that floating as they
 fell
 Lit up a torrent-bow.

And high on every peak a statue
 seem'd
 To hang on tiptoe, tossing up
 A cloud of incense of all odour steam'd
 From out a golden cup.
 So that she thought, " And who shall
 gaze upon
 My palace with unblinded eyes,
 While this great bow will waver in the
 sun,
 And that sweet incense rise ? "

For that sweet incense rose and never
 fail'd,
 And, while day sank or mounted
 higher,
 The light aerial gallery, golden-rail'd,
 Burnt like a fringe of fire.
 Likewise the deep-set windows,
 stain'd and traced,
 Would seem slow-flaming crimson
 fires
 From shadow'd grots of arches inter-
 laced,
 And tipt with frost-like spires.

Full of long-sounding corridors it was,
 That over-vaulted grateful gloom,
 Thro' which the livelong day my soul
 did pass,
 Well-pleased, from room to room.

Full of great rooms and small the
 palace stood,
 All various, each a perfect whole
 From living Nature, fit for every
 mood
 And change of my still soul.

For some were hung with arras green
 and blue,
 Showing a gaudy summer-morn,
 Where with puff'd cheek the belted
 hunter blew
 His wreathed bugle-horn.

One seem'd all dark and red—a tract
 of sand,
 And some one pacing there alone,

Who paced for ever in a glimmering
 land,
 Lit with a low large moon.
 One show'd an iron coast and angry
 waves,
 You seem'd to hear them climb
 and fall
 And roar rock-thwarted under bellow-
 ing caves,
 Beneath the windy wall.

And one, a full-fed river winding slow
 By herds upon an endless plain,
 The ragged rims of thunder brooding
 low,
 With shadow-streaks of rain.

And one, the reapers at their sultry
 toil.
 In front they bound the sheaves,
 Behind
 Were realms of upland, prodigal in
 oil,
 And hoary to the wind.

And one, a foreground black with
 stones and slags,
 Beyond, a line of heights, and
 higher
 All barr'd with long white cloud the
 scornful crags,
 And highest, snow and fire.

And one, an English home—gray
 twilight pour'd
 On dewy pastures, dewy trees,
 Softer than sleep—all things in order
 stored,
 A haunt of ancient Peace.

Nor these alone, but every landscape
 fair
 As fit for every mood of mind,
 Or gay, or grave, or sweet, or stern,
 was there,
 Not less than truth design'd.

* * *

Or the maid-mother by a crucifix,
 In tracts of pasture sunny-warm,
 Beneath branch-work of costly sar-
 donyx
 Sat smiling, babe in arm,

Or in a clear-wall'd city on the sea,
Near gilded organ-pipes, her hair
Wound with white roses, slept St.
Cecily;
An angel look'd at her.

Or thronging all one porch of Paradise,
A group of Houris bow'd to see
The dying Islamite, with hands and eyes
That said, We wait for thee.

Or mythic Uther's deeply-wounded son
In some fair space of sloping greens
Lay, dozing in the vale of Avalon,
And watch'd by weeping queens.

Or hollowing one hand against his ear,
To list a foot-fall, ere he saw
The wood-nymph, stay'd the Ausonian king to hear
Of wisdom and of law.

Or over hills with peaky tops engrail'd
And many a tract of palm and rice,
The throne of Indian Cama slowly sail'd
A summer fann'd with spice.

Or sweet Europa's mantle blew unclasp'd,
From off her shoulder backward borne :

From one hand droop'd a crocus :
one hand grasp'd
The mild bull's golden horn.

Or else flush'd Ganymede, his rosy thigh
Half-buried in the Eagle's down,
Sole as a flying star shot thro' the sky
Above the pillar'd town.

Nor these alone : but every legend fair
Which the supreme Caucasian mind
Carved out of Nature for itself, was there,
Not less than life, design'd.

Then in the towers I placed great bells
that swung,
Moved of themselves, with silver sound ;
And with choice paintings of wise men I hung
The royal dais round.

For there was Milton like a seraph strong,
Beside him Shakespeare bland and mild ;
And there the world-worn Dante grasp'd his song,
And somewhat grimly smiled.

And there the Ionian father of the rest ;
A million wrinkles carved his skin ;
A hundred winters snow'd upon his breast,
From cheek and throat and chin.

Above, the fair hall-coiling stately-set
Many an arch high up did lift,
And angels rising and descending met
With interchange of gift.

Below was all mosaic choicely plann'd
With cycles of the human tale
Of this wide world, the times of every land
So wrought, they will not fail.

The people here, a beast of burden slow,
Toil'd onward, prick'd with goads and stings ;
Here play'd, a tiger, rolling to and fro
The heads and crowns of kings ;

Here rose, an athlete, strong to break or bind
All force in bonds that might endure,
And here once more like some sick man declined,
And trusted any cure.

But over these she trod : and those great bells
Began to chime. She took her throne :

She sat betwixt the shining Oriels,
To sing her songs alone.

And thro' the topmost Oriels' colour'd
flame
Two godlike faces gazed below;
Plato the wise, and large-brow'd
Verulam,
The first of those who know.

And all those names, that in their
motion were
Full-welling fountain-heads of
change,
Betwixt the slender shafts were
blazon'd fair
In diverse raiment strange:

Thro' which the lights, rose, amber,
emerald, blue,
Flush'd in her temples and her
eyes,
And from her lips, as morn from
Memnon, drew
Rivers of melodies.

No nightingale delighteth to prolong
Her low preamble all alone,
More than my soul to hear her echo'd
song
Throb thro' the ribbed stone;

Singing and murmuring in her feast-
ful mirth,
Joying to feel herself alive,
Lord over Nature, Lord of the visible
earth,
Lord of the senses five;

Communing with herself: "All these
are mine,
And let the world have peace or
wars,
'Tis one to me." She—when young
night divine
Crown'd dying day with stars,

Making sweet close of his delicious
toils—
Lit light in wreaths and anadems,
And pure quintessences of precious
oils
In hollow'd moons of gems,

To mimic heaven; and clapt her
hands and cried,

"I marvel if my still delight
In this great house so royal-rich, and
wide,
Be flatter'd to the height.

"O all things fair to sate my various
eyes!
O shapes and hues that please me
well!

O silent faces of the Great and Wise,
My Gods, with whom I dwell!

"O God-like isolation which art mine,
I can but count thee perfect gain,
What time I watch the darkening
droves of swine
That range on yonder plain.

"In filthy sloughs they roll a prurient
skin,
They graze and wallow, breed and
sleep;
And oft some brainless devil enters
in,
And drives them to the deep."

Then of the moral instinct would she
prate,
And of the rising from the dead,
As hers by right of full-accomplish'd
Fate;
And at the last she said:

"I take possession of man's mind
and deed,
I care not what the sects may
brawl.
I sit as God holding no form of creed,
But contemplating all."

Full oft the riddle of the painful earth
Flash'd thro' her as she sat alone,
Yet not the less held she her solemn
mirth,
And intellectual throne.

And so she throve and prosper'd: so
three years
She prosper'd: on the fourth she
fell,

- Like Herod, when the shout was in
his ears,
Struck thro' with pangs of hell.
- Lest she should fail and perish utterly,
God, before whom ever lie bare
The abysmal deeps of Personality,
Plagued her with sore despair.
- When she would think, where'er she
turn'd her sight,
The airy hand confusion wrought,
Wrote "Mene, mene," and divided
quite
The kingdom of her thought.
- Deep dread and loathing of her soli-
tude
Fell on her, from which mood was
born
Scorn of herself; again, from out
that mood
Laughter at her self-scorn.
- "What! is not this my place of
strength," she said,
"My spacious mansion built for
me,
Whereof the strong foundation-stones
were laid
Since my first memory?"
- But in dark corners of her palace
stood
Uncertain shapes; and unawares
On white-eyed phantasms weeping
tears of blood,
And horrible nightmares,
- And hollow shades enclosing hearts
of flame,
And, with dim fretted foreheads all,
On corpses three-months-old at noon
she came,
That stood against the wall.
- A spot of dull stagnation, without
light
Or power of movement, seem'd my
soul,
'Mid onward-sloping motions infinite
Making for one sure goal.
- A still salt pool, lock'd in with bars of
sand;
Left on the shore; that hears all
night
The plunging seas draw backward
from the land
Their moon-led waters white.
- A star that with the choral starry
dance
Join'd not, but stood, and standing
saw
The hollow orb of moving Circum-
stance
Roll'd round by one fix'd law.
- Back on herself her serpent pride had
curl'd.
"No voice," she shriek'd in that
lone hall,
"No voice breaks thro' the stillness
of this world:
One deep, deep silence all!"
- She, mouldering with the dull earth's
mouldering sod,
Inwraught tenfold in slothful shame,
Lay there exiled from eternal God,
Lost to her place and name;
- And death and life she hated equally,
And nothing saw, for her despair,
But dreadful time, dreadful eternity,
No comfort anywhere;
- Remaining utterly confused with
fears,
And ever worse with growing time,
And ever unrelieved by dismal tears,
And all alone in crime:
- Shut up as in a crumbling tomb, girt
round
With blackness as a solid wall,
Far off she seem'd to hear the dully
sound
Of human footsteps fall.
- As in strange lands a traveller walk-
ing slow,
In doubt and great perplexity;
A little before moon-rise hears the
low
Moan of an unknown sea;

And knows not if it be thunder or a
sound

Of rocks thrown down, or one deep
cry

Of great wild beasts ; then thinketh,
" I have found

A new land, but I die."

She howl'd aloud, " I am on fire with-
in.

There comes no murmur of reply.
What is it that will take away my sin,
And save me lest I die ? "

So when four years were wholly
finished,

She threw her royal robes away.

" Make me a cottage in the vale,"
she said,

" Where I may mourn and pray.

" Yet pull not down my palace towers,
that are

So lightly, beautifully built:
Perchance I may return with others
there

When I have purged my guilt."

LADY CLARA VERE DE VERE

LADY Clara Vere de Vere,
Of me you shall not win renown :
You thought to break a country heart
For pastime, ere you went to town.
At me you smiled, but unbeguiled
I saw the snare, and I retired :
The daughter of a hundred Earls,
You are not one to be desired.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
I know you proud to bear your
name,
Your pride is yet no mate for mine,
Too proud to care from whence I
came.

Nor would I break for your sweet sake
A heart that doats on truer charms.
A simple maiden in her flower
Is worth a hundred coats-of-arms.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
Some meeker pupil you must find,
For were you queen of all that is,
I could not stoop to such a mind.

You sought to prove how I could
love,

And my disdain is my reply.
The lion on your old stone gates
Is not more cold to you than I.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
You put strange memories in my
head.

Not thrice your branching limes have
blown

Since I beheld young Laurence
dead.

Oh your sweet eyes, your low replies :
A great enchantress you may be ;

But there was that across his throat
Which you had hardly cared to see.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere, •
When thus he met his mother's
view,

She had the passions of her kind,
She spake some certain truths of
you.

Indeed I heard one bitter word
That scarce is fit for you to hear ;
Her manners had not that repose
Which stamps the caste of Vere de
Vere.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
There stands a spectre in your
hall :

The guilt of blood is at your door :
You changed a wholesome heart to
gall.

You held your course without re-
morse,

To make him trust his modest
worth,

And, last, you fix'd a vacant stare,
And slew him with your noble
birth.

Trust me, Clara Vere de Vere,
From yon blue heavens above us
bent

The grand old gardener and his wife
Smile at the claims of long descent.

Howe'er it be, it seems to me,
'Tis only noble to be good.

Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman
blood.

I know you, Clara Vere de Vere :
 You pine among your halls and
 towers :
 The languid light of your proud eyes
 Is wearied of the rolling hours.
 In glowing health, with boundless
 wealth,
 But sickening of a vague disease,
 You know so ill to deal with time,
 You needs must play such pranks
 as these.

Clara, Clara Vere de Vere,
 If Time be heavy on your hands,
 Are there no beggars at your gate,
 Nor any poor about your lands ?
 Oh ! teach the orphan-boy to read,
 Or teach the orphan-girl to sew,
 Pray Heaven for a human heart,
 And let the foolish yeoman go.

THE MAY QUEEN

You must wake and call me early,
 call me early, mother dear ;
 To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time
 of all the glad New-year ;
 Of all the glad New-year, mother,
 the maddest merriest day ;
 For I'm to be Queen o' the May,
 mother, I'm to be Queen o' the
 May.

There's many a black black eye, they
 say, but none so bright as mine ;
 There's Margaret and Mary, there's
 Kate and Caroline ;
 But none so fair as little Alice in all
 the land they say,
 So I'm to be Queen o' the May,
 mother, I'm to be Queen o' the
 May.

I sleep so sound all night, mother,
 that I shall never wake,
 If you do not call me loud when the
 day begins to break :
 But I must gather knots of flowers,
 and buds and garlands gay,
 For I'm to be Queen o' the May,
 mother, I'm to be Queen o' the
 May.

As I came up the valley whom think
 ye should I see,
 But Robin leaning on the bridge be-
 neath the hazel-tree ?
 He thought of that sharp look,
 mother, I gave him yesterday,—
 But I'm to be Queen o' the May,
 mother, I'm to be Queen o' the
 May.

He thought I was a ghost, mother,
 for I was all in white,
 And I ran by him without speaking,
 like a flash of light.
 They call me cruel-hearted, but I care
 not what they say,
 For I'm to be Queen o' the May,
 mother, I'm to be Queen o' the
 May.

They say he's dying all for love, but
 that can never be :
 They say his heart is breaking,
 mother—what is that to me ?
 There's many a bolder lad 'ill woo me
 any summer day,
 And I'm to be Queen o' the May,
 mother, I'm to be Queen o' the
 May.

Little Elsie shall go with me to-
 morrow to the green,
 And you'll be there, too, mother, to
 see me made the Queen ;
 For the shepherd lads on every side
 'ill come from far away,
 And I'm to be Queen o' the May,
 mother, I'm to be Queen o' the
 May.

The honeysuckle round the porch has
 wov'n its wavy bowers,
 And by the meadow-trenches blow
 the faint sweet cuckoo-flowers ;
 And the wild marsh-marigold shines
 like fire in swamps and hollows
 gray,
 And I'm to be Queen o' the May,
 mother, I'm to be Queen o' the
 May.

The night-winds come and go, mother,
 upon the meadow-grass,
 And the happy stars above them seem
 to brighten as they pass ;

There will not be a drop of rain the
whole of the livelong day,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May,
mother, I'm to be Queen o' the
May.

All the valley, mother, 'ill be fresh
and green and still,
'And the cowslip and the crowfoot are
over all the hill,
And the rivulet in the flowery dale 'ill
merrily glance and play,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May,
mother, I'm to be Queen o' the
May.

So you must wake and call me early,
call me early, mother dear,
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time
of all the glad New-year :
To-morrow 'ill be of all the year the
maddest merriest day,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May,
mother, I'm to be Queen o' the
May.

NEW-YEAR'S EVE

If you're waking call me early, call
me early, mother dear,
For I would see the sun rise upon the
glad New-year.
It is the last New-year that I shall
ever see,
Then you may lay me low i' the mould
and think no more of me.

To-night I saw the sun set : he set and
left behind
The good old year, the dear old time,
and all my peace of mind ;
And the New-year's coming up,
mother, but I shall never see
The blossom on the blackthorn, the
leaf upon the tree.

Last May we made a crown of
flowers : we had a merry day ;
Beneath the hawthorn on the green
they made me Queen of May ;
And we danced about the may-pole
and in the hazel copse,
Till Charles's Wain came out above
the tall white chimney-tops.

There's not a flower on all the hills :
the frost is on the pane :
I only wish to live till the snowdrops
come again :
I wish the snow would melt and the
sun come out on high :
I long to see a flower so before the day
I die.

The building rook 'ill caw from the
windy tall elm-tree,
And the tufted plover pipe along the
fallow lea,
And the swallow 'ill come back again
with summer o'er the wave,
But I shall lie alone, mother, within
the mouldering grave.

Upon the chancel-casement, and up-
on that grave of mine,
In the early early morning the sum-
mer sun 'ill shine,
Before the red cock crows from the
farm upon the hill,
When you are warm-asleep, mother,
and all the world is still.

When the flowers come again, mother,
beneath the waning light
You'll never see me more in the long
gray fields at night ;
When from the dry dark wold the
summer airs blow cool
On the oat-grass and the sword-grass,
and the bulrush in the pool.

You'll bury me, my mother, just be-
neath the hawthorn shade,
And you'll come sometimes and see
me where I am lowly laid.
I shall not forget you, mother, I shall
hear you when you pass,
With your feet above my head in the
long and pleasant grass.

I have been wild and wayward, but
you'll forgive me now ;
You'll kiss me, my own mother, and
forgive me ere I go ;
Nay, nay, you must not weep, nor let
your grief be wild,
You should not fret for me, mother,
you have another child.

If I can I'll come again, mother,
 from out my resting-place ;
 Tho' you'll not see me, mother, I shall
 look upon your face ;
 Tho' I cannot speak a word, I shall
 harken what you say,
 And be often, often with you when
 you think I'm far away.

Goodnight, goodnight, when I have
 said goodnight for evermore,
 And you see me carried out from the
 threshold of the door ;
 Don't let Effie come to see me till my
 grave be growing green :
 She'll be a better child to you than
 ever I have been.

She'll find my garden-tools upon the
 granary floor :
 Let her take 'em : they are hers : I
 shall never garden more :
 But tell her, when I'm gone, to train
 the rose-bush that I set
 About the parlour-window and the
 box of mignonette.

Good-night, sweet mother : call me
 before the day is born.
 All night I lie awake, but I fall asleep
 at morn ;
 But I would see the sun rise upon the
 glad New-year.
 So, if you're waking, call me, call me
 early, mother dear.

CONCLUSION

I THOUGHT to pass away before, and
 yet alive I am ;
 And in the fields all round I hear the
 bleating of the lamb.
 How sadly, I remember, rose the
 morning of the year !
 To die before the snowdrop came,
 and now the violet's here.

O sweet is the new violet, that comes
 beneath the skies,
 And sweeter is the young lamb's voice
 to me that cannot rise,

And sweet is all the land about, and
 all the flowers that blow,
 And sweeter far is death than life to
 me that long to go.

It seem'd so hard at first, mother, to
 leave the blessed sun,
 And now it seems as hard to stay, and
 yet His will be done !
 But still I think it can't be long before
 I find release ;
 And that good man, the clergyman,
 has told me words of peace.

O blessings on his kindly voice and
 on his silver hair !
 And blessings on his whole life long,
 until he meet me there !
 O blessings on his kindly heart and on
 his silver head !
 A thousand times I blest him, as he
 knelt beside my bed.

He taught me all the mercy, for he
 show'd me all the sin.
 Now, tho' my lamp was lighted late,
 there's One will let me in :
 Nor would I now be well, mother,
 again, if that could be,
 For my desire is but to pass to Him
 that died for me.

I did not hear the dog howl, mother,
 or the death-watch beat,
 There came a sweeter token when the
 night and morning meet :
 But sit beside my bed, mother, and
 put your hand in mine,
 And Effie on the other side, and I will
 tell the sign.

All in the wild March-morning I
 heard the angels call ;
 It was when the moon was setting,
 and the dark was over all ;
 The trees began to whisper, and the
 wind began to roll,
 And in the wild March-morning I
 heard them call my soul.

For lying broad awake I thought of
 you and Effie dear ;
 I saw you sitting in the house, and I
 no longer here ;

With all my strength I pray'd for both, and so I felt resign'd,
And up the valley came a swell of music on the wind.

For ever and for ever with those just souls and true—
And what is life, that we should moan? why make we such ado?

I thought that it was fancy, and I listen'd in my bed,
And then did something speak to me—I know not what was said;
For great delight and shuddering took hold of all my mind,
And up the valley came again the music on the wind.

For ever and for ever, all in a blessed home—
And there to wait a little while till you and Effie come—
To lie within the light of God, as I lie upon your breast—
And the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

But you were sleeping; and I said,
"It's not for them: it's mine."
And if it comes three times, I thought,
I take it for a sign.

And once again it came, and close beside the window-bars,
Then seem'd to go right up to Heaven and die among the stars.

So now I think my time is near. I trust it is. I know
The blessed music went that way my soul will have to go.
And for myself, indeed, I care not if I go to-day.
But, Effie, you must comfort *her* when I am past away.

And say to Robin a kind word, and tell him not to fret;
There's many worthier than I, would make him happy yet.
If I had lived—I cannot tell—I might have been his wife;
But all these things have ceased to be, with my desire of life.

O look! the sun begins to rise, the heavens are in a glow;
He shines upon a hundred fields, and all of them I know.
And there I move no longer now, and there his light may shine—
Wild flowers in the valley for other hands than mine.

O sweet and strange it seems to me, that ere this day is done
The voice, that now is speaking, may be beyond the sun—

THE LOTOS-EATERS

"COURAGE!" he said, and pointed toward the land,
"This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon."
In the afternoon they came unto a land,
In which it seem'd always afternoon.
All round the coast the languid air did swoon,
Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.
Full-faced above the valley stood the moon;
And like a downward smoke, the slender stream
Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

A land of streams! some, like a downward smoke,
Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go;
And some thro' wavering lights and shadows broke,
Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.
They saw the gleaming river seaward flow
From the inner land: far off, three mountain-tops,
Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,
Stood sunset-flush'd: and, dew'd with showery drops,
Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.

The charmed sunset linger'd low
 adown
 In the red West: thro' mountain
 clefts the dale
 Was seen far inland, and the yellow
 down
 Border'd with palm, and many a
 winding vale
 And meadow, set with slender galin-
 gale;
 A land where all things always seem'd
 the same!
 And round about the keel with faces
 pale,
 Dark faces pale against that rosy
 flame,
 The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-
 eaters came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted
 stem,
 Laden with flower and fruit, whereof
 they gave
 To each, but whoso did receive of
 them,
 And taste, to him the gushing of the
 wave
 Far far away did seem to mourn and
 rave
 On alien shores; and if his fellow
 spake,
 His voice was thin, as voices from the
 grave;
 And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all
 awake,
 And music in his ears his beating
 heart did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow
 sand,
 Between the sun and moon upon the
 shore;
 And sweet it was to dream of Father-
 land,
 Of child, and wife, and slave; but
 evermore
 Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the
 oar,
 Weary the wandering fields of barren
 foam.
 Then some one said, "We will return
 no more;"

And all at once they sang, "Our island
 home
 Is far beyond the wave; we will no
 longer roam."

CHORIC SONG

There is sweet music here that softer
 falls
 Than petals from blown roses on the
 grass,
 Or night-dews on still waters between
 walls
 Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming
 pass;
 Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,
 Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes;
 Music that brings sweet sleep down
 from the blissful skies.
 Here are cool mosses deep,
 And thro' the moss the ivies creep,
 And in the stream the long-leaved
 flowers weep,
 And from the craggy ledge the poppy
 hangs in sleep.

Why are we weigh'd upon with heavi-
 ness,
 And utterly consumed with sharp dis-
 tress,
 While all things else have rest from
 weariness?
 All things have rest: why should we
 toil alone,
 We only toil, who are the first of
 things,
 And make perpetual moan,
 Still from one sorrow to another
 thrown:
 Nor ever fold our wings,
 And cease from wanderings,
 Nor steep our brows in slumber's
 holy balm;
 Nor harken what the inner spirit
 sings,
 "There is no joy but calm!"
 Why should we only toil, the roof
 and crown of things?

Lo! in the middle of the wood,
 The folded leaf is woo'd from out the
 bud
 With winds upon the branch, and
 there
 Grows green and broad, and takes no
 care,
 Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon
 Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow
 Falls, and floats adown the air.
 Lo! sweeten'd with the summer light,
 The full-juiced apple, waxing over-
 mellow,
 Drops in a silent autumn night.
 All its allotted length of days,
 The flower ripens in its place,
 Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath
 no toil,
 Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
 Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.
 Death is the end of life; ah, why
 Should life all labour be?
 Let us alone. Time driveth onward
 fast,
 And in a little while our lips are
 dumb.
 Let us alone. What is it that will
 last?
 All things are taken from us, and be-
 come
 Portions and parcels of the dreadful
 Past.
 Let us alone. What pleasure can we
 have
 To war with evil? Is there any
 peace
 In ever climbing up the climbing
 wave?
 All things have rest, and ripen toward
 the grave
 In silence; ripen, fall and cease:
 Give us long rest or death, dark death,
 or dreamful ease.

How sweet it were, hearing the down-
 ward stream,
 With half-shut eyes ever to seem

Falling asleep in a half-dream!
 To dream and dream, like yonder
 amber light,
 Which will not leave the myrrh-bush
 on the height;
 To hear each other's whisper'd
 speech;
 Eating the Lotos day by day,
 To watch the crisping ripples on the
 beach,
 And tender curving lines of creamy
 spray;
 To lend our hearts and spirits
 wholly
 To the influence of mild-minded
 melancholy;
 To muse and brood and live again in
 memory,
 With those old faces of our infancy
 Heap'd over with a mound of grass,
 Two handfuls of white dust, shut in
 an urn of brass!

Dear is the memory of our wedded
 lives,
 And dear the last embraces of our
 wives
 And their warm tears: but all hath
 suffer'd change;
 For surely now our household hearths
 are cold:
 Our sons inherit us: our looks are
 strange:
 And we should come like ghosts to
 trouble joy.
 Or else the island princes over-bold
 Have eat our substance, and the min-
 strel sings
 Before them of the ten-years' war in
 Troy,
 And our great deeds, as half-forgotten
 things.
 Is there confusion in the little isle?
 Let what is broken so remain.
 The Gods are hard to reconcile:
 'Tis hard to settle order once again.
 There is confusion worse than death,
 Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
 Long labour unto aged breath,
 Sore task to hearts worn out with
 many wars
 And eyes grown dim with gazing on
 the pilot-stars.

But, propt on beds of amaranth and
moly,
How sweet (while warm airs lull us,
blowing lowly)
With half-dropt eyelids still,
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
To watch the long bright river draw-
ing slowly
His waters from the purple hill—
To hear the dewy echoes calling
From cave to cave thro' the thick-
twined vine—
To watch the emerald-colour'd water
falling
Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-wreath
divine!
Only to hear and see the far-off
sparkling brine,
Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd
out beneath the pine.

VIII

The Lotos blooms below the barren
peak:
The Lotos blows by every winding
creek:
All day the wind breathes low with
mellow tone:
Thro' every hollow cave and alley
lone
Round and round the spicy downs
the yellow Lotos-dust is blown.
We have had enough of action, and
of motion we,
Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard,
when the surge was seething
free,
Where the wallowing monster spouted
his foam-fountains in the sea.
Let us swear an oath, and keep it
with an equal mind,
In the hollow Lotos-land to live and
lie reclined
On the hills like Gods together, care-
less of mankind.
For they lie beside their nectar, and
the bolts are hurl'd
Far below them in the valleys, and
the clouds are lightly curl'd
Round their golden houses, girdled
with the gleaming world:

Where they smile in secret, looking
over wasted lands,
Blight and famine, plague and earth-
quake, roaring deeps and fiery
sands,
Clanging fights, and flaming towns,
and sinking ships, and praying
hands.
But they smile, they find a music
centred in a doleful song
Steaming up, a lamentation and an
ancient tale of wrong,
Like a tale of little meaning tho'
the words are strong;
Chanted from an ill-used race of men
that cleave the soil,
Sow the seed, and reap the harvest
with enduring toil,
Storing yearly little ducs of wheat,
and wine and oil;
Till they perish and they suffer—
some, 'tis whisper'd—down in
hell
Suffer endless anguish, others in
Elysian valleys dwell,
Resting weary limbs at last on beds
of asphodel.
Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet
than toil, the shore
Than labour in the deep mid-ocean,
wind and wave and oar;
Oh rest ye, brother mariners, we will
not wander more.

A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN

I READ, before my eyelids dropt their
shade,
"The Legend of Good Women,"
long ago
Sung by the morning star of song,
who made
His music heard below;
Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose
sweet breath
Preluded those melodious bursts,
that fill
The spacious times of great Elizabeth
With sounds that echo still.

- And, for a while, the knowledge of his art
Held me above the subject, as strong gales
Hold swollen clouds from raining, tho' my heart,
Brimful of those wild tales,
- Charged both mine eyes with tears. In every hand
I saw, wherever light illumineth,
Beauty and anguish walking hand in hand
The downward slope to death.
- Those far-renowned brides of ancient song
Peopled the hollow dark, like burning stars,
And I heard sounds of insult, shame, and wrong,
And trumpets blown for wars ;
- And clattering flints batter'd with clanging hoofs :
And I saw crowds in column'd sanctuaries ;
And forms that pass'd at windows and on roofs
Of marble palaces ;
- Corpses across the threshold ; heroes tall
Dislodging pinnacle and parapet
Upon the tortoise creeping to the wall ;
Lances in ambush set ;
- And high shrine-doors burst thro' with heated blasts
That run before the fluttering tongues of fire ;
White surf wind-scatter'd over sails and masts,
And ever climbing higher ;
- Squadrons and squares of men in brazen plates,
Scaffolds, still sheets of water, divers wocs,
Ranges of glimmering vaults with iron grates,
And hush'd seraglios.
- So shape chased shape as swift as, when to land
Bluster the winds and tides the self-same way,
Crisp foam-flakes scud along the level sand,
Torn from the fringe of spray.
- I started once, or seem'd to start in pain,
Resolved on noble things, and strove to speak,
As when a great thought strikes along the brain,
And flushes all the cheek.
- And once my arm was lifted to hew down
A cavalier from off his saddle-bow,
That bore a lady from a leaguer'd town ;
And then, I know not how,
- All those sharp fancies, by down-lapsing thought
Stream'd onward, lost their edges, and did creep
Roll'd on each other, rounded, smooth'd and brought
Into the gulfs of sleep.
- At last methought that I had wander'd far
In an old wood : fresh-wash'd in coolest dew,
The maiden splendours of the morning star
Shook in the steadfast blue.
- Enormous elmtree-boles did stoop and lean
Upon the dusky brushwood underneath
Their broad curved branches, fledged with clearest green,
New from its silken sheath.
- The dim red morn had died, her journey done,
And with dead lips smiled at the twilight plain,
Half-fall'n across the threshold of the sun,
Never to rise again.

- There was no motion in the dumb dead air,
 Not any song of bird or sound of rill;
 Gross darkness of the inner sepulchre
 Is not so deadly still
- As that wide forest. Growths of jasmine turn'd
 Their humid arms festooning tree to tree,
 And at the root thro' lush green grasses burn'd
 The red anemone.
- I knew the flowers, I knew the leaves,
 I knew
 The tearful glimmer of the languid dawn
 On those long, rank, dark wood-walks
 drench'd in dew,
 Leading from lawn to lawn.
- The smell of violets, hidden in the green,
 Pour'd back into my empty soul and frame
 The times when I remember to have been
 Joyful and free from blame.
- And from within me a clear undertone
 Thrill'd thro' mine ears in that unblissful clime
 "Pass freely thro': the wood is all thine own,
 Until the end of time."
- At length I saw a lady within call,
 Still than chisell'd marble, standing there;
 A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,
 And most divinely fair.
- Her loveliness with shame and with surprise
 Froze my swift speech: she turning on my face
 The star-like sorrows of immortal eyes,
 Spoke slowly in her place.
- "I had great beauty: ask thou not my name:
 No one can be more wise than destiny.
 Many drew swords and died.
 Where'er I came
 I brought calamity."
- "No marvel, sovereign lady: in fair field
 Myself for such a face had boldly died,"
 I answer'd free; and turning I appeal'd
 To one that stood beside.
- But she, with sick and scornful looks
 averse,
 To her full height her stately stature draws;
 "My youth," she said, "was blasted with a curse:
 This woman was the cause.
- "I was cut off from hope in that sad place,
 Which yet to name my spirit loathes and fears:
 My father held his hand upon his face;
 I, blinded with my tears,
- "Still strove to speak: my voice was thick with sighs
 As in a dream. Dimly I could descry
 The stern black-bearded kings with wolfish eyes,
 Waiting to see me die.
- "The high masts flicker'd as they lay afloat;
 The crowds, the temples, waver'd, and the shore;
 The bright death quiver'd at the victim's throat;
 Touch'd; and I knew no more."
- Whereto the other with a downward brow:
 "I would the white cold heavy-plunging foam,
 Whirl'd by the wind, had roll'd me deep below,
 Then when I left my home."

Her slow full words sank thro' the
silence drear,
As thunder-drops fall on a sleeping
sea :

Sudden I heard a voice that cried,
"Come here,
That I may look on thee."

I turning saw, throned on a flowery
rise,
One sitting on a crimson scarf
unroll'd ;

A queen, with swarthy cheeks and
bold black eyes,
Brow-bound with burning gold.

She, flashing forth a haughty smile,
began :

"I govern'd men by change, and
so I sway'd
All moods. 'Tis long since I have
seen a man.
Once, like the moon, I made

"The ever-shifting currents of the
blood
According to my humour ebb and
flow.
I have no men to govern in this wood :
That makes my only woe.

"Nay—yet it chafes me that I could
not bend
One will ; nor tame and tutor with
mine eye
That dull cold-blooded Cæsar. Pry-
thee, friend,
Where is Mark Antony ?

"The man, my lover, with whom I
rode sublime
On Fortune's neck ; we sat as God
by God :
The Nilus would have risen before
his time
And flooded at our nod.

"We drank the Libyan Sun to sleep,
and lit
Lamps which outburn'd Canopus.
O my life
In Egypt ! O the dalliance and the
wit,
The flattery and the strife,

"And the wild kiss, when fresh from
war's alarms,
My Hercules, my Roman Antony,
My mailed Bacchus leapt into my
arms,
Contented there to die !

"And there he died : and when I
heard my name
Sigh'd forth with life I would not
brook my fear
Of the other : with a worm I balk'd
his fame.
What else was left ? look here ! "

(With that she tore her robe apart,
and half
The polish'd argent of her breast
to sight
Laid bare. Thereto she pointed with
a laugh,
Showing the aspich's bite)

"I died a Queen. The Roman soldier
found
Me lying dead, my crown about my
brows,
A name for ever !—lying robed and
crown'd,
Worthy a Roman spouse."

Her warbling voice, a lyre of widest
range
Struck by all passion, did fall down
and glance
From tone to tone, and glided thro'
all change
Of liveliest utterance.

When she made pause I knew not for
delight ;
Because with sudden motion from
the ground
She raised her piercing orbs, and fill'd
with light
The interval of sound.

Still with their fires Love tipt his
keenest darts ;
As once they drew into two burning
rings
All beams of Love, melting the mighty
hearts
Of captains and of kings.

- Slowly my sense undazzled. Then I
 heard
 A noise of some one coming thro'
 the lawn,
 And singing clearer than the crested
 bird,
 That claps his wings at dawn.
- "The torrent brooks of hallow'd
 Israel
 From craggy hollows pouring, late
 and soon,
 Sound all night long, in falling thro'
 the dell,
 Far-heard beneath the moon.
- "The balmy moon of blessed Israel
 Floods all the deep-blue gloom with
 beams divine:
 All night the splinter'd crags that
 wall the dell
 With spires of silver shine."
- As one that museth where broad sun-
 shine laves
 The lawn by some cathedral, thro'
 the door
 Hearing the holy organ rolling waves
 Of sound on roof and floor
- Within, and anthem sung, is charm'd
 and tied
 To where he stands,—so stood
 I, when that flow
 Of music left the lips of her that died
 To save her father's vow;
- The daughter of the warrior Gileadite,
 A maiden pure; as when she went
 along
 From Mizpeh's tower'd gate with
 welcome light,
 With timbrel and with song.
- My words leapt forth: "Heaven
 heads the count of crimes
 With that wild oath." She ren-
 der'd answer high:
 "Not so, nor once alone; a thousand
 times
 I would be born and die.
- "Single I grew, like some green plant,
 whose root
 Creeps to the garden water-pipes
 beneath,
 Feeding the flower; but ere my flower
 to fruit
 Changed, I was ripe for death.
- "My God, my land, my father—
 these did move
 Me from my bliss of life, that
 Nature gave,
 Power'd softly with a threefold cord
 of love
 Down to a silent grave.
- "And I went mourning, 'No fair
 Hebrew boy
 Shall smile away my maiden blame
 among
 The Hebrew mothers'—emptied of
 all joy,
 Leaving the dance and song,
- "Leaving the olive-gardens far below,
 Leaving the promise of my bridal
 bower,
 The valleys of grape-loaded vines that
 glow
 Beneath the battled tower.
- "The light white cloud swam over us.
 Anon
 We heard the lion roaring from his
 den;
 We saw the large white stars rise one
 by one,
 Or, from the darken'd glen,
- "Saw God divide the night with
 flying flame,
 And thunder on the everlasting
 hills.
 I heard Him, for He spake, and grief
 became
 A solemn scorn of ills.
- "When the next moon was roll'd
 into the sky,
 Strength came to me that equal'd
 my desire.
 How beautiful a thing it was to die
 For God and for my sire]

- "It comforts me in this one thought
to dwell,
That I subdued me to my father's
will ;
Because the kiss he gave me, ere I
fell,
Sweetens the spirit still.
- "Moreover it is written that my race
Hew'd Ammon, hip and thigh, from
Aroer
On Arnon unto Minneth." Here her
face
Glow'd, as I look'd at her.
- She lock'd her lips : she left me where
I stood :
"Glory to God," she sang, and
past afar,
Thridding the sombre boskage of the
wood,
Toward the morning-star.
- Losing her carol I stood pensively,
As one that from a casement leans
his head,
When midnight bells cease ringing
suddenly,
And the old year is dead.
- "Alas ! alas ! " a low voice, full of
care,
Murmur'd beside me : " Turn and
look on me :
I am that Rosamond, whom men
call fair,
If what I was I be.
- "Would I had been some maiden
coarse and poor !
O me, that I should ever see the
light !
Those dragon eyes of anger'd Eleanor
Do hunt me, day and night."
- She ceased in tears, fallen from hope
and trust :
To whom the Egyptian : " O, you
tamely died !
You should have clung to Fulvia's
waist, and thrust
The dagger thro' her side."
- With that sharp sound the white
dawn's creeping beams,
Stol'n to my brain, dissolved the
mystery
Of folded sleep. The captain of my
dreams
Ruled in the eastern sky.
- Morn broaden'd on the borders of the
dark,
Ere I saw her, who clasp'd in her
last trance
Her murder'd father's head, or Joan
of Arc,
A light of ancient France ;
- Or her, who knew that Love can
vanquish Death,
Who kneeling, with one arm about
her king,
Drew forth the poison with her balmy
breath,
Sweet as new buds in Spring.
- No memory labours longer from the
deep
Gold-mines of thought to lift the
hidden ore
That glimpses, moving up, than I
from sleep
To gather and tell o'er
- Each little sound and sight. With
what dull pain
Compass'd, how eagerly I sought
to strike
Into that wondrous track of dreams
again !
But no two dreams are like.
- As when a soul laments, which hath
been blest,
Desiring what is mingled with past
years,
In yearnings that can never be ex-
prest
By signs or groans or tears
- Because all words, tho' cull'd with
choicest art,
Failing to give the bitter of the
sweet,
Wither beneath the palate, and the
heart
Faints, faded by its heat.

MARGARET

O SWEET pale Margaret,
 O rare pale Margaret,
 What lit your eyes with tearful
 power,
 Like moonlight on a falling shower?
 Who lent you, love, your mortal
 dower
 Of pensive thought and aspect
 pale,
 Your melancholy sweet and frail
 As perfume of the cuckoo-flower?
 From the westward-winding flood,
 From the evening-lighted wood,
 From all things outward you
 have won
 A tearful grace, as tho' you stood
 Between the rainbow and the sun.
 The very smile before you speak,
 That dimples your transparent cheek,
 Encircles all the heart, and feedeth
 The senses with a still delight
 Of dainty sorrow without sound,
 Like the tender amber round,
 Which the moon about her spread-
 eth,
 Moving thro' a fleecy night.

You love, remaining peacefully,
 To hear the murmur of the strife,
 But enter not the toil of life.
 Your spirit is the calmed sea,
 Laid by the tumult of the fight.
 You are the evening star, always
 Remaining betwixt dark and
 bright:
 Lull'd echoes of laborious day
 Come to you, gleams of mellow
 light
 Float by you on the verge of night,

III

What can it matter, Margaret,
 What songs below the waning
 stars
 The lion-heart, Plantagenet,
 Sang looking thro' his prison
 bars?
 Exquisite Margaret, who can
 tell

The last wild thought of Chatelet,
 Just ere the falling axe did part
 The burning brain from the
 true heart,
 Even in her sight he loved so
 well?

A fairy shield your Genius made
 And gave you on your natal day.
 Your sorrow, only sorrow's shade,
 Keeps real sorrow far away.
 You move not in such solitudes,
 You are not less divine,
 But more human in your moods,
 Than your twin-sister, Adeline.
 Your hair is darker, and your eyes
 Touch'd with a somewhat darker
 hue,
 And less ærially blue,
 But ever trembling thro' the dew
 Of dainty-woeful sympathies.

O sweet pale Margaret,
 O rare pale Margaret,
 Come down, come down, and hear
 me speak:
 Tie up the ringlets on your cheek:
 The sun is just about to set,
 The arching limes are tall and shady,
 And faint, rainy lights are seen,
 Moving in the leavy beech.
 Rise from the feast of sorrow, lady,
 Where all day long you sit
 between
 Joy and woe, and whisper
 each.
 Or only look across the lawn,
 Look out below your bower-eaves,
 Look down, and let your blue eyes
 dawn
 Upon me thro' the jasmine-leaves.

THE BLACKBIRD

O BLACKBIRD! sing me something
 well:
 While all the neighbours shoot thee
 round,

I keep smooth plats of fruitful
ground,
Where thou may'st warble, cat and
dwell.

The espaliers and the standards all
Are thine; the range of lawn and
park:

The unnetted black-hearts ripen
dark,
All thine, against the garden wall.

Yet, tho' I spared thee all the spring,
Thy sole delight is, sitting still,
With that gold dagger of thy bill
To fret the summer jenneting.

A golden bill! the silver tongue,
Cold February loved, is dry:
Plenty corrupts the melody
That made thee famous once, when
young:

And in the sultry garden-squares,
Now thy flute-notes are changed to
coarse,

I hear thee not at all, or hoarse
As when a hawker hawks his wares.

Take warning! he that will not sing
While yon sun prospers in the blue,
Shall sing for want, ere leaves are
new,
Caught in the frozen palms of Spring.

THE DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR

FULL knee-deep lies the winter snow,
And the winter winds are wearily
sighing:

Toll ye the church-bell sad and slow,
And tread softly and speak low,
For the old year lies a-dying.

Old year, you must not die;
You came to us so readily,
You lived with us so steadily,
Old year, you shall not die.

He lieth still: he doth not move:
He will not see the dawn of day.
He hath no other life above.
He gave me a friend, and a true true-
love,
And the New-year will take 'em away.

Old year, you must not go;
So long as you have been with us,
Such joy as you have seen with
us,
Old year, you shall not go.

He froth'd his bumpers to the brim;
A jollier year we shall not see.
But tho' his eyes are waxing dim,
And tho' his foes speak ill of him,
He was a friend to me.

Old year, you shall not die;
We did so laugh and cry with you,
I've half a mind to die with you,
Old year, if you must die.

He was full of joke and jest,
But all his merry quips are o'er.
To see him die, across the waste
His son and heir doth ride post-haste,
But he'll be dead before.

Every one for his own.
The night is starry and cold, my
friend,

And the New-year blithe and bold,
my friend,
Comes up to take his own.

How hard he breathes! over the snow
I heard just now the crowing cock.
The shadows flicker to and fro:
The cricket chirps: the light burns
low:

'Tis nearly twelve o'clock.
Shake hands, before you die.
Old year, we'll dearly rue for you:
What is it we can do for you?
Speak out before you die.

His face is growing sharp and thin.
Alack! our friend is gone.
Close up his eyes: tie up his chin:
Step from the corpse, and let him in
That standeth there alone,
And waiteth at the door,
There's a new foot on the floor, my
friend,
And a new face at the door, my
friend,
A new face at the door.

TO J. S.

THE wind, that beats the mountain,
blows

More softly round the open wold,
And gently comes the world to those
That are cast in gentle mould.

And me this knowledge bolder made,
Or else I had not dared to flow
In these words toward you, and in-
vade

Even with a verse your holy woe.

'Tis strange that those we lean on
most,

Those in whose laps our limbs are
nursed,

Fall into shadow, soonest lost :
Those we love first are taken first.

God gives us love. Something to
love

He lends us ; but, when love is
grown

To ripeness, that on which it throve
Falls off, and love is left alone.

This is the curse of time. Alas !

In grief I am not all unlearn'd ;
Once thro' mine own doors Death did
pass ;

One went, who never hath return'd.

He will not smile—not speak to me
Once more. Two years his chair
is seen

Empty before us. That was he
Without whose life I had not been.

Your loss is rarer : for this star
Rose with you thro' a little arc
Of heaven, nor having wander'd far
Shot on the sudden into dark.

I knew your brother : his mute dust
I honour and his living worth :
A man more pure and bold and just
Was never born into the earth.

I have not look'd upon you nigh,
Since that dear soul hath fall'n
asleep.

Great Nature is more wise than I :
I will not tell you not to weep.

And tho' mine own eyes fill with dew,
Drawn from the spirit thro' the
brain,

I will not even preach to you,
“ Weep, weeping dulls the inward
pain.”

Let Grief be her own mistress still.
She loveth her own anguish deep
More than much pleasure. Let her
will

Be done—to weep or not to weep.

I will not say “ God's ordinance
Of Death is blown in every wind ; ”
For that is not a common chance
That takes away a noble mind.

His memory long will live alone
In all our hearts, as mournful light
That broods above the fallen sun,
And dwells in heaven half the night.

Vain solace ! Memory standing near
Cast down her eyes, and in her
throat

Her voice seem'd distant, and a tear
Dropt on the letters as I wrote.

I wrote I know not what. In truth,
How *should* I soothe you anyway,
Who miss the brother of your youth ?
Yet something I did wish to say ;

For he too was a friend to me ;
Both are my friends, and my true
breast

Bleedeth for both ; yet it may be
That only silence suiteth best.

Words weaker than your grief would
make

Grief more. 'Twere better I should
cease ;

Although myself could almost take
The place of him that sleeps in
peace.

Sleep sweetly, tender heart, in peace :
Sleep, holy spirit, blessed soul,
While the stars burn, the moons in-
crease,
And the great ages onward roll.

Sleep till the end, true soul and sweet.
Nothing comes to thee new or
strange.

Sleep full of rest from head to feet ;
Lie still, dry dust, secure of change.

BRITAIN

You ask me, why, tho' ill at ease,
Within this region I subsist,
Whose spirits falter in the mist,
And languish for the purple seas ?

It is the land that freemen till,
That sober-suited Freedom chose,
The land, where girt with friends or
foes
A man may speak the thing he will :

A land of settled government,
A land of just and old renown,
Where Freedom broadens slowly
down
From precedent to precedent :

Where faction seldom gathers head,
But by degrees to fullness wrought,
The strength of some diffusive
thought
Hath time and space to work and
spread.

Should banded unions persecute
Opinion, and induce a time
When single thought is civil crime,
And individual freedom mute ;

Tho' Power should make from land
to land
The name of Britain trebly great—
Tho' every channel of the State
Should almost choke with golden
sand—

Yet waft me from the harbour-mouth,
Wild wind ! I seek a warmer sky,
And I will see before I die
The palms and temples of the South.

FREEDOM

Of old sat Freedom on the heights,
The thunders breaking at her feet :
Above her shook the starry lights :
She heard the torrents meet.

There in her place she did rejoice,
Self-gather'd in her prophet-mind,
But fragments of her mighty voice
Came rolling on the wind.

Then stopt she down thro' town and
field
To mingle with the human race,
And part by part to men reveal'd
The fullness of her face—

Grave mother of majestic works,
From her isle-altar gazing down,
Who, God-like, grasps the triple
forks,
And, King-like, wears the crown :

Her open eyes desire the truth.
The wisdom of a thousand years
Is in them. May perpetual youth
Keep dry their light from tears ;

That her fair form may stand and
shine,
Make bright our days and light our
dreams,
Turning to scorn with lips divine
The falsehood of extremes !

LOVE THOU THY LAND

LOVE thou thy land, with love far-
brought
From out the storied Past, and
used
Within the Present, but transfused
Thro' future time by power of
thought.

True love turn'd round on fixed poles,
Love, that endures not sordid ends,
For English natures, freemen,
friends,
Thy brothers and immortal souls.

But pamper not a hasty time,
Nor feed with crude imaginings
The herd, wild hearts and feeble
wings,
That every sophister can lime.

Deliver not the tasks of might
To weakness, neither hide the ray
From those, not blind, who wait for
day,
Tho' sitting girt with doubtful light.

Make knowledge circle with the
winds ;
But let her herald, Reverence, fly
Before her to whatever sky
Bear seed of men and growth of
minds.

Watch what main-currents draw the
years :
Cut Prejudice against the grain :
But gentle words are always gain :
Regard the weakness of thy peers :

Nor toil for title, place, or touch
Of pension, neither count on praise :
It guerdon to guerdon after-days :
Nor deal in watch-words overmuch ;

Not clinging to some ancient saw ;
Not master'd by some modern
term ;
Not swift nor slow to change, but
firm :
And in its season bring the law ;

That from Discussion's lip may fall
With Life, that, working strongly,
binds—
Set in all lights by many minds,
To close the interests of all.

For Nature also, cold and warm,
And moist and dry, devising long,
Thro' many agents making strong,
Matures the individual form.

Meet is it changes should control
Our being, lest we rust in ease,
We all are changed by still degrees.
All but the basis of the soul.

So let the change which comes be free
To ingroove itself with that, which
flies,
And work, a joint of state, that plies
Its office, moved with sympathy.

A saying, hard to shape in act ;
For all the past of Time reveals
A bridal dawn of thunder-peals,
Wherever Thought hath wedded
Fact.

Ev'n now we hear with inward strife
A motion toiling in the gloom—
The Spirit of the years to come
Yearning to mix himself with Life.

A slow-develop'd strength awaits
Completion in a painful school ;
Phantoms of other forms of rule,
New Majesties of mighty States—

The warders of the growing hour,
But vague in vapour, hard to
mark ;
And round them sea and air are
dark
With great contrivances of Power.

Of many changes, aptly join'd,
Is bodied forth the second whole.
Regard gradation, lest the soul
Of Discord race the rising wind ;

A wind to puff your idol-fires,
And heap their ashes on the head ;
To shame the boast so often made,
That we are wiser than our sires.

Oh yet, if Nature's evil star
Drive men in manhood, as in youth,
To follow flying steps of Truth
Across the brazen bridge of war—

If New and Old, disastrous feud,
Must ever shock, like armed foes,
And this be true, till Time shall
close,
That Principles are rain'd in blood ;

Not yet the wise of heart would cease
To hold his hope thro' shame and
guilt,

But with his hand against the hilt,
Would pace the troubled land, like
Peace;

Not less, tho' dogs of Faction bay,
Would serve his kind in deed and
word,

Certain, if knowledge bring the
sword,
That knowledge takes the sword
away—

Would love the gleams of good that
broke

From either side, nor veil his eyes:
And if some dreadful need should rise
Would strike, and firmly, and one
stroke:

To-morrow yet would reap to-day,
As we bear blossom of the dead;
Earn well the thrifty months, nor
wed
Raw Haste, half-sister to Delay.

THE GOOSE

I KNEW an old wife lean and poor,
Her rags scarce held together;
There strode a stranger to the door,
And it was windy weather.

He held a goose upon his arm,
He utter'd rhyme and reason,
"Here, take the goose, and keep you
warm,
It is a stormy season."

She caught the white goose by the leg,
A goose—'twas no great matter.
The goose let fall a golden egg
With cackle and with clatter.

She dropt the goose, and caught the
pelf,
And ran to tell her neighbours;
And bless'd herself, and curs'd herself,
And rested from her labours.

And feeding high, and living soft,
Grew plump and able-bodied;
Until the grave churchwarden doff'd,
'The parson smirk'd and nodded.

So sitting, served by man and maid,
She felt her heart grow prouder:
But ah! the more the white geoselaid
It clack'd and cackled louder.

It clutter'd here, it chuckled there;
It stirr'd the old wife's mettle:
She shifted in her elbow-chair,
And hurl'd the pan and kettle.

"A quinsy choke thy cursed note!"
Then wax'd her anger stronger.
"Go, take the goose, and wring her
throat,
I will not bear it longer."

Then yelp'd the cur, and yawl'd the
cat;
Ran Gaffer, stumbled Gammer.
The goose flew this way and flew that,
And fill'd the house with clamour.

As head and heels upon the floor
They flounder'd all together,
There strode a stranger to the door,
And it was windy weather:

He took the goose upon his arm,
He utter'd words of scorning;
"So keep you cold, or keep you warm,
It is a stormy morning."

The wild wind rang from park and
plain,
And round the attics rumbled,
Till all the tables danced again,
And half the chimneys tumbled.

The glass blew in, the fire blew out,
The blast was hard and harder.
Her cap blew off, her gown blew up,
And a whirlwind clear'd the larder.

And while on all sides breaking loose
Her household fled the danger,

Quoth she, "The Devil take the
goose,
And God forget the stranger!"

THE EPIC

At Francis Allen's on the Christmas-
eve,—
The game of forfeits done—the girls
all kiss'd
Beneath the sacred bush and past
away—
The parson Holmes, the poet Everard
Hall,
The host, and I sat round the wassail-
bowl,
Then half-way ebb'd : and there we
held a talk,
How all the old honour had from
Christmas gone,
Or gone, or dwindled down to some
odd games
In some odd nooks like this ; till I,
tired out
With cutting eights that day upon
the pond,
Where, three times slipping from the
outer edge,
I bump'd the ice into three several
stars,
Fell in a doze ; and half-awake I
heard
The parson taking wide and wider
sweeps,
Now harping on the church-com-
missioners,
Now hawking at Geology and schism ;
Until I woke, and found him settled
down
Upon the general decay of faith
Right thro' the world, "at home
was little left,
And none abroad : there was no
anchor, none,
To hold by." Francis, laughing,
clapt his hand
On Everard's shoulder, with "I hold
by him."
"And I," quoth Everard, "by the
wassail-bowl."
"Why yes," I said, "we knew your
gift that way

At college : but another which you
had,
I mean of verse (for so we held it
then,)
What came of that ? " "You know,"
said Frank, "he burnt
His epic, his King Arthur, some twelve
books"—
And then to me demanding why ?
"Oh, sir,
He thought that nothing new was
said, or else
Something so said 'twas nothing—
that a truth
Looks freshest in the fashion of the
day :
God knows : he has a mint of reasons ;
ask.
It pleased *me* well enough." "Nay,
nay," said Hall,
"Why take the style of those heroic
times ?
For nature brings not back the
Mastodon,
Nor we those times ; and why should
any man
Remodel models ? these twelve books
of mine
Were faint Homeric echoes, nothing-
worth,
Mere chaff and draff, much better
burnt." "But I,"
Said Francis, "pick'd the eleventh
from this hearth,
And have it : keep a thing, its use
will come.
I hoard it as a sugar-plum for
Holmes."
He laugh'd, and I, though sleepy,
like a horse
That hears the corn-bin open, prick'd
my ears ;
For I remember'd Everard's college
fame
When we were Freshmen : then at my
request
He brought it ; and the poet little
urged,
But with some prelude of disparage-
ment,
Read, mouthing out his hollow oes
and aes,
Deep-chested music, and to this
result.

MORTE D'ARTHIUR

So all day long the noise of battle
 roll'd
 Among the mountains by the winter
 sea ;
 Until King Arthur's table, man by
 man,
 Had fall'n in Lyonness about their
 Lord,
 King Arthur : then, because his
 wound was deep,
 The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
 Sir Bedivere, the last of all his
 knights,
 And bore him to a chapel nigh the
 field,
 A broken chancel with a broken
 cross,
 That stood on a dark strait of barren
 land.
 On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
 Lay a great water, and the moon was
 full.
 Then spake King Arthur to Sir
 Bedivere :
 " The sequel of to-day unsolders all
 The goodliest fellowship of famous
 knights
 Whereof this world holds record.
 Such a sleep
 They sleep—the men I loved. I
 think that we
 Shall never more, at any future time,
 Delight our souls with talk of knightly
 deeds,
 Walking about the gardens and the
 halls
 Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
 I perish by this people which I made,—
 Tho' Merlin sware that I should come
 again
 To rule once more—but let what will
 be, be,
 I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm
 That without help I cannot last till
 morn.
 Thou therefore take my brand Excali-
 bur,
 Which was my pride : for thou re-
 memberest how
 In those old days, one summer noon,
 an arm

Rose up from out the bosom of the
 lake,
 Clothed in white samite, mystic,
 wonderful,
 Holding the sword—and how I
 row'd across
 And took it, and have worn it, like a
 king :
 And, wheresoever I am sung or told
 In aftertime, this also shall be
 known :
 But now delay not : take Excalibur,
 And fling him far into the middle
 mere :
 Watch what thou seest, and lightly
 bring me word."
 To him replied the bold Sir Bedi-
 vere :
 " It is not meet, Sir King, to leave
 thee thus,
 Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the
 helm.
 A little thing may harm a wounded
 man.
 Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,
 Watch what I see, and lightly bring
 thee word."
 So saying, from the ruin'd shrine
 he stept
 And in the moon athwart the place of
 tombs,
 Where lay the mighty bones of ancient
 men,
 Old knights, and over them the sea-
 wind sang
 Shri!ll, chill, with flakes of foam. He,
 stepping down
 By zig-zag paths, and juts of pointed
 rock,
 Came on the shining levels of the lake.
 There drew he forth the brand
 Excalibur,
 And o'er him, drawing it, the winter
 moon,
 Brightening the skirts of a long cloud,
 ran forth
 And sparkled keen with frost against
 the hilt :
 For all the haft twinkled with
 diamond sparks,
 Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-
 work
 Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so
 long

That both his eyes were dazzled, as
 he stood,
 This way and that dividing the swift
 mind,
 In act to throw : but at the last it
 seem'd
 Better to leave Excalbur conceal'd
 There in the many-knotted water-
 flags,
 That whistled stiff and dry about the
 marge.
 Sostrode he back slow to the wounded
 king.
 Then spake King Arthur to Sir
 Bedivere :
 " Hast thou perform'd my mission
 which I gave ?
 What is it thou hast seen ? or what
 hast heard ? "
 And answer made the bold Sir
 Bedivere :
 " I heard the ripple washing in the
 reeds,
 And the wild water lapping on the
 crag."
 To whom replied King Arthur,
 faint and pale :
 " Thou hast betray'd thy nature and
 thy name,
 Not rendering true answer, as be-
 seem'd
 Thy féalty, nor like a noble knight :
 For surer sign had follow'd, either
 hand,
 Or voice, or else a motion of the
 mere.
 This is a shameful thing for men to
 lie.
 Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go
 again
 As thou art lief and dear, and do the
 thing
 I bad thee, watch, and lightly bring
 me word."
 Then went Sir Bedivere the second
 time
 Across the ridge, and paced beside the
 mere,
 Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in
 thought ;
 But when he saw the wonder of the
 hilt,
 How curiously and strangely chased,
 he smote

His palms together, and he cried
 aloud.
 " And if indeed I cast the brand
 away,
 Surely a precious thing, one worthy
 note,
 Should thus be lost for ever from the
 earth,
 Which might have pleased the eyes of
 many men.
 What good should follow this, if this
 were done ?
 What harm, undone ? deep harm to
 disobey,
 Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.
 Were it well to obey then, if a king
 demand
 An act unprofitable, against himself ?
 The King is sick, and knows not what
 he does.
 What record, or what relic of my lord
 Should he to aftertime, but empty
 breath
 And rumours of a doubt ? but were
 this kept,
 Stored in some treasure-house of
 mighty kings,
 Some one might show it at a joust of
 arms,
 Saying, ' King Arthur's sword, Exca-
 libur,
 Wrought by the lonely maiden of the
 Lake.
 Nine years she wrought it, sitting in
 the deeps
 Upon the hidden bases of the hills.'
 So might some old man speak in the
 aftertime
 To all the people, winning reverence.
 But now much honour and much
 fame were lost."
 So spake he, clouded with his own
 conceit,
 And hid Excalibur the second time,
 And so strode back slow to the
 wounded King.
 Then spoke King Arthur, breathing
 heavily :
 " What is it thou hast seen ? or what
 hast heard ? "
 And answer made the bold Sir
 Bedivere :
 " I heard the water lapping on the
 crag,

And the long ripple washing in the reeds."

To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath :

"Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue, Unknightly, traitor-hearted ! Woe is me !

Authority forgets a dying king,
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye
That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,

For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,

In whom should meet the offices of all,

Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt ;

Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.

Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence :

But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my hands."

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,

And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged

Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd the sword,

And strongly wheel'd and threw it.
The great brand

Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon,

And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,

Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,

Seen where the moving isles of winter shock

By night, with noises of the northern sea,

So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur :

But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm

Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,

And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him

Three times, and drew him under in the mere.

And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath :

"Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.

Speak out : what is it thou hast heard, or seen ? "

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :

"Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems

Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,

Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,

Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,

So great a miracle as yonder hilt.
Then with both hands I flung him,

wheeling him ;

But when I look'd again, behold an arm,

Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,

That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him

Three times, and drew him under in the mere."

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard :

"My end draws nigh ; 'tis time that I were gone.

Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,

And bear me to the margin ; yet I fear

My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die."

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,

Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,

And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes

As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere Remorsefully regarded thro' his

tears,

And would have spoken, but he found not words,

Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,

O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,

And rising bore him thro' the place
of tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur
panted hard,
Like one that feels a nightmare on his
bed

When all the house is mute. So
sigh'd the King,

Muttering and murmuring at his ear
"Quick, quick!

I fear it is too late, and I shall die."

But the other swiftly strode from
ridge to ridge,

Clothed with his breath, and looking,
as he walk'd,

Larger than human on the frozen
hills.

He heard the deep behind him, and a
cry

Before. His own thought drove him
like a goad.

Dry clash'd his harness in the icy
caves

And barren chasms, and all to left
and right

The bare black cliff clang'd round him,
as he based

His feet on juts of slippery crag that
rang

Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed
heels—

And on a sudden, lo! the level
lake,

And the long glories of the winter
moon.

Then saw they how there hove a
dusky barge,

Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to
stern,

Beneath them; and descending they
were ware

That all the decks were dense with
stately forms

Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a
dream—by these

Three Queens with crowns of gold—
and from them rose

A cry that shiver'd to the tingling
stars,

And, as it were one voice, an agony
Of lamentation, like a wind, that
shrills

All night in a waste land, where no
one comes,

Or hath come, since the making of
the world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, "Place
me in the barge,"

And to the barge they came. There
those three Queens

Put forth their hands, and took the
King, and wept.

But she, that rose the tallest of them
all

And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and
chafed his hands,

And call'd him by his name, com-
plaining loud,

And dropping bitter tears against his
brow

Striped with dark blood: for all his
face was white

And colourless, and like the wither'd
moon

Smote by the fresh beam of the
springing east;

And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd
with drops

Of onset; and the light and lustrous
curls—

That made his forehead like a rising
sun

High from the dais-throne—were
parch'd with dust;

Or, clotted into points and hanging
loose,

Mix'd with the knightly growth that
fringed his lips.

So like a shatter'd column lay the
King;

Not like that Arthur who, with lance
in rest,

From spur to plume a star of tourna-
ment,

Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and
charged

Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.
Then loudly cried the bold Sir

Bedivere,

"Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall
I go?

Where shall I hide my forehead and
my eyes?

For now I see the true old times are
dead,

When every morning brought a noble
chance,

And every chance brought out a noble knight.

Such times have been not since the light that led

The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.

But now the whole ROUND TABLE is dissolved

Which was an image of the mighty world ;

And I, the last, go forth companionless, And the days darken round me, and the years,

Among new men, strange faces, other minds."

And slowly answer'd Arthur from the barge :

"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,

And God fulfils himself in many ways, Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.

Comfort thyself : what comfort is in me ?

I have lived my life, and that which I have done

May He within himself make pure ` but thou,

If thou shouldst never see my face again,

Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer

Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice

Rise like a fountain for me night and day.

For what are men better than sheep or goats

That nourish a blind life within the brain,

If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer

Both for themselves and those who call them friend ?

For so the whole round earth is every way

Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.

But now farewell. I am going a long way

With these thou seest—if indeed I go— (For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)

To the island-valley of Avilion ;

Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,

Nor ever wind blows loudly ; but it lies Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with

orchard-lawns

And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,

Where I will heal me of my grievous wound."

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail

Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan

That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,

Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood

With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere

Revolving many memories, till the hull

Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,

And on the mere the wailing died away.

Here ended Hall, and our last light, that long

Had wink'd and threaten'd darkness, flared and fell :

At which the Parson, sent to sleep with sound,

And waked with silence, grunted " Good ! " but we

Sat rapt : it was the tone with which he read—

Perhaps some modern touches here and there

Redeem'd it from the charge of nothingness—

Or else we loved the man, and prized his work ;

I know not : but we sitting, as I said, The cock crew loud ; as at that time of

year

The lusty bird takes every hour for dawn :

Then Francis, muttering, like a man ill-used,

" There now—that's nothing ! " drew a little back,

And drove his heel into the smoulder'd log,

That sent a blast of sparkles up the
 flue :
 And so to bed ; where yet in sleep I
 seem'd
 To sail with Arthur under looming
 shores,
 Point after point ; till on to dawn,
 when dreams
 Begin to feel the truth and stir of day,
 To me, methought, who waited with
 a crowd,
 There came a bark that, blowing for-
 ward, bore
 King Arthur, like a modern gentleman
 Of stateliest port ; and all the people
 cried,
 " Arthur is come again : he cannot
 die."
 Then those that stood upon the hills
 behind
 Repeated—" come again, and thrice
 as fair ;"
 And, further inland, voices echoed—
 " come
 With all good things, and war shall be
 no more."
 At this a hundred bells began to peal,
 That with the sound I woke, and
 heard indeed
 The clear church-bells ring in the
 Christmas morn.

THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER ; OR, THE PICTURES

THIS morning is the morning of the
 day,
 When I and Eustace from the city
 went
 To see the Gardener's Daughter ; I
 and he,
 Brothers in Art ; a friendship so com-
 plete
 Portion'd in halves between us, that
 we grew
 The fable of the city where we dwelt.
 My Eustace might have sat for Her-
 cules ;
 So muscular he spread, so broad of
 breast.
 He, by some law that holds in love,
 and draws
 The greater to the lesser, long desired

A certain miracle of symmetry,
 A miniature of loveliness, all grace
 Summ'd up and closed in little ;—
 Juliet, she
 So light of foot, so light of spirit—oh,
 she
 To me myself, for some three careless
 moons,
 The summer pilot of an empty heart
 Unto the shores of nothing ! Know
 you not
 Such touches are but embassies of
 love,
 To tamper with the feelings, ere he
 found
 Empire for life ? but Eustace painted
 her,
 And said to me, she sitting with us
 then,
 " When will *you* paint like this ? "
 and I replied,
 (My words were half in earnest, half
 in jest,)
 " 'Tis not your work, but Love's.
 Love, unperceived,
 A more ideal Artist he than all,
 Came, drew your pencil from you,
 made those eyes
 Darker than darkest pansies, and
 that hair
 More black than ashbuds in the front
 of March."
 And Juliet answer'd laughing, " Go
 and see
 The Gardener's daughter : trust me,
 after that,
 You scarce can fail to match his
 masterpiece."
 And up we rose, and on the spur we
 went.
 Not wholly in the busy world, nor
 quite
 Beyond it, blooms the garden that I
 love.
 News from the humming city comes
 to it
 In sound of funeral or of marriage
 bells ;
 And, sitting muffled in dark leaves,
 you hear
 The windy clanging of the minster
 clock ;
 Although between it and the garden
 . lies

A league of grass, wash'd by a slow
 broad stream,
 That, stirr'd with languid pulses of
 the oar,
 Waves all its lazy lilies, and creeps on,
 Barge-laden, to three arches of a
 bridge
 Crown'd with the minster-towers.
 The fields between
 Are dewy-fresh, browsed by deep-
 udder'd kine,
 And all about the large lime feathers
 low,
 The lime a summer home of murmur-
 ous wings.
 In that still place she, hoarded in
 herself,
 Grew, seldom seen : not less among
 us lived
 Her fame from lip to lip. Who had
 not heard
 Of Rose, the Gardener's daughter ?
 Where was he,
 So blunt in memory, so old at heart,
 At such a distance from his youth in
 grief,
 That, having seen, forgot ? The
 common mouth,
 So gross to express delight, in praise
 of her
 Grew oratory. Such a lord is Love,
 And Beauty such a mistress of the
 world.
 And if I said that Fancy, led by
 Love,
 Would play with flying forms and
 images,
 Yet this is also true, that, long before
 I look'd upon her, when I heard her
 name
 My heart was like a prophet to my
 heart,
 And told me I should love. A crowd
 of hopes,
 That sought to sow themselves like
 winged seeds,
 Born out of everything I heard and
 saw,
 Flutter'd about my senses and my
 soul ;
 And vague desires, like fitful blasts of
 balm
 To one that travels quickly, made the
 air

Of Life delicious, and all kinds of
 thought,
 That verged upon them, sweeter
 than the dream
 Dream'd by a happy man, when the
 dark East,
 Unseen, is brightening to his bridal
 morn.
 And sure this orbit of the memory
 folds
 For ever in itself the day we went
 To see her. All the land in flowery
 squares,
 Beneath a broad and equal-blowing
 wind,
 Smelt of the coming summer, as one
 large cloud
 Drew downward : but all else of
 Heaven was pure
 Up to the Sun, and May from verge to
 verge,
 And May with me from head to heel.
 And now,
 As tho' 'twere yesterday, as tho' it
 were
 The hour just flown, that morn with
 all its sound,
 (For those old Mays had thrice the
 life of these,)

Rings in mine ears. The steer forgot
 to graze,
 And, where the hedge-row cuts the
 pathway, stood,
 Leaning his horns into the neighbour
 field,
 And lowing to his fellows. From the
 woods
 Came voices of the well-contented
 doves.
 The lark could scarce get out his notes
 for joy,
 But shook his song together as he
 near'd
 His happy home, the ground. To
 left and right,
 The cuckoo told his name to all the
 hills ;
 The mellow ouzel fluted in the elm ;
 The redcap whistled ; and the night-
 ingale
 Sang loud, as tho' he were the bird of
 day.
 And Eustace turn'd, and smiling
 said to me,

"Hear how the bushes echo! by my
 life,
 These birds have joyful thoughts.
 Think you they sing
 Like poets, from the vanity of song?
 Or have they any sense of why they
 sing?
 And would they praise the heavens for
 what they have?"
 And I made answer, "Were there
 nothing else
 For which to praise the heavens but
 only love,
 That only love were cause enough
 for praise."
 Lightly he laugh'd, as one that
 read my thought,
 And on we went; but ere an hour had
 pass'd,
 We reach'd a meadow slanting to the
 North;
 Down which a well-worn pathway
 courted us
 To one green wicket in a privet
 hedge;
 This, yielding, gave into a grassy
 walk
 Thro' crowded lilac-ambush trimly
 pruned;
 And one warm gust, full-fed with per-
 fume, blew
 Beyond us, as we enter'd in the cool.
 The garden stretches southward. In
 the midst
 A cedarspread his dark-green layers of
 shade.
 The garden-glasses shone, and
 momentarily
 The twinkling laurel scatter'd silver
 lights.
 "Eustace," I said, "This wonder
 keeps the house."
 He nodded, but a moment after-
 wards
 He cried, "Look! look!" Before
 he ceased I turn'd,
 And, ere a star can wink, beheld her
 there.
 For up the porch there grew an
 Eastern rose,
 That, flowering high, the last night's
 gale had caught,
 And blown across the walk. One arm
 aloft—
 Gown'd in pure white, that fitted to
 the shape—
 Holding the bush, to fix it back, she
 stood.
 A single stream of all her soft brown
 hair
 Pour'd on one side: the shadow of
 the flowers
 Stole all the golden gloss, and, waver-
 ing
 Lovingly lower, trembled on her
 waist—
 Ah, happy shade—and still went
 wavering down,
 But, ere it touch'd a foot, that might
 have danced
 The greensward into greener circles,
 dipt,
 And mix'd with shadows of the com-
 mon ground!
 But the full day dwelt on her brows,
 and sunn'd
 Her violet eyes, and all her Hebe-
 bloom,
 And doubled his own warmth against
 her lips,
 And on the bounteous wave of such a
 breast
 As never pencil drew. Half light,
 half shade,
 She stood, a sight to make an old
 man young.
 So rapt, we near'd the house; but
 she, a Rose
 In roses, mingled with her fragrant
 toil,
 Nor heard us come, nor from her
 tendance turn'd
 Into the world without; till close at
 hand,
 And almost ere I knew mine own in-
 tent,
 This murmur broke the stillness of
 that air
 Which brooded round about her:
 "Ah, one rose,
 One rose, but one, by those fair
 fingers cull'd,
 Were worth a hundred kisses press'd
 on lips
 Less exquisite than thine."
 She look'd: but all
 Suffused with blushes—neither self-
 possess'd

Nor started, but betwixt this mood
 and that,
 Divided in a graceful quiet—paused,
 And dropt the branch she held, and
 turning, wound
 Her looser hair in braid, and stirr'd
 her lips
 For some sweet answer, tho' no
 answer came,
 Nor yet refused the rose, but granted
 it,
 And moved away, and left me, statue-
 like,
 In act to render thanks.
 I, that whole day,
 Saw her no more, altho' I linger'd
 there
 Till every daisy slept, and Love's
 white star
 Beam'd thro' the thicken'd cedar in
 the dusk.
 So home we went, and all the live-
 long way
 With solemn gibe did Eustace banter
 me.
 "Now," said he, "will you climb the
 top of Art.
 You cannot fail but work in hues to
 dim
 The Titianic Flora. Will you match
 My Juliet? you, not you,—the Master,
 Love,
 A more ideal Artist he than
 all."
 So home I went, but could not sleep
 for joy,
 Reading her perfect features in the
 gloom,
 Kissing the rose she gave me o'er
 and o'er,
 And shaping faithful record of the
 glance
 That graced the giving—such a noise
 of life
 Swarm'd in the golden present, such a
 voice
 Call'd to me from the years to come,
 and such
 A length of bright horizon rimm'd the
 dark.
 And all that night I heard the watch-
 men peal
 The sliding season: all that night I
 heard

The heavy clocks knolling the drowsy
 hours,
 The drowsy hours, dispensers of all
 good,
 O'er the mute city stole with folded
 wings,
 Distilling odours on me as they went
 To greet their fairer sisters of the East.
 Love at first sight, first-born, and
 heir to all,
 Made this night thus. Henceforward
 squall nor storm
 Could keep me from that Eden where
 she dwelt.
 Light pretexts drew me: sometimes
 a Dutch love
 For tulips; then for roses, moss or
 musk,
 To grace my city-rooms; or fruits
 and cream
 Served in the weeping elm; and more
 and more
 A word could bring the colour to my
 cheek;
 A thought would fill my eyes with
 happy dew;
 Love trebled life within me, and with
 each
 The year increased.
 The daughters of the year,
 One after one, thro' that still garden
 pass'd:
 Each garlanded with her peculiar
 flower
 Danced into light, and died into the
 shade;
 And each in passing touch'd with
 some new grace
 Or seem'd to touch her, so that day
 by day,
 Like one that never can be wholly
 known,
 Her beauty grew; till Autumn
 brought an hour
 For Eustace, when I heard his deep
 "I will,"
 Breathed, like the covenant of a God,
 to hold
 From thence thro' all the worlds:
 but I rose up
 Full of his bliss, and following her
 dark eyes
 Felt earth as air beneath me, till I
 reach'd

The wicket-gate, and found her I had not staid so long to tell you
 standing there. all,
 There sat we down upon a garden But while I mused came Memory
 mound, with sad eyes,
 Two mutually enfolded ; Love, the Holding the folded annals of my
 third, youth ;
 Between us, in the circle of his arms And while I mused, Love with knit
 Enwound us both ; and over many a brows went by,
 range And with a flying finger swept my
 Of waning lime the gray cathedral lips,
 towers, And spake, " Be wise : not easily
 Across a hazy glimmer of the west, forgiven
 Reveal'd their shining windows : Are those, who setting wide the
 from them clash'd doors, that bar
 The bells ; we listen'd ; with the The secret bridal chambers of the
 time we play'd ; heart,
 We spoke of other things ; we Let in the day." Here, then, my
 coursed about words have end.
 The subject most at heart, more near Yet might I tell of meetings, of
 and near, farewells—
 Like doves about a dovecote, wheel- Of that which came between, more
 ing round sweet than each,
 The central wish, until we settled In whispers, like the whispers of the
 there. leaves
 Then, in that time and place, I That tremble round a nightingale—
 spoke to her, in sighs
 Requiring, tho' I knew it was mine Which perfect Joy, perplex'd for
 own, utterance,
 Yet for the pleasure that I took to Stole from her sister Sorrow. Might
 hear, I not tell
 Requiring at her hand the greatest Of difference, reconciliation, pledges
 gift, given,
 A woman's heart, the heart of her I And vows, where there was never
 loved ; need of vows,
 And in that time and place she And kisses, where the heart on one
 answer'd me, wild leap
 And in the compass of three little Hung tranced from all pulsation, as
 words, above
 More musical than ever came in one The heavens between their fairy
 The silver fragments of a broken fleeces pale
 voice, Sow'd all their mystic gulfs with
 Made me most happy, faltering " I fleeting stars ;
 am thine." Or while the balmy glooming, cres-
 cent-lit,
 Shall I cease here ? Is this Spread the light haze along the
 enough to say river-shores,
 That my desire, like all strongest And in the hollows ; or as once we
 hopes, met
 By its own energy fulfill'd itself, Unhcedful, tho' beneath a whisper-
 Merged in completion ? Would you ing rain
 learn at full Night slid down one long stream of
 How passion rose thro' circumstan- sighing wind,
 tial grades And in her bosom bore the baby,
 Beyond all grades develop'd ? and Sleep.
 indeed

But this whole hour your eyes
 have been intent
 On that veil'd picture—veil'd, for
 what it holds
 May not be dwelt on by the common
 day.
 This prelude has prepared thee.
 Raise thy soul;
 Make thine heart ready with thine
 eyes: the time
 Is come to raise the veil.
 Behold her there,
 As I beheld her ere she knew my
 heart,
 My first, last love; the idol of my
 youth,
 The darling of my manhood, and,
 alas!
 Now the most blessed memory of
 mine age.

DORA

With farmer Allan at the farm abode
 William and Dora. William was his
 son,
 And she his niece. He often look'd
 at them,
 And often thought "I'll make them
 man and wife."
 Now Dora felt her uncle's will in all,
 And yearn'd towards William; but
 the youth, because
 He had been always with her in the
 house,
 Thought not of Dora.

Then there came a day
 When Allan call'd his son, and said,
 "My son:
 I married late, but I would wish to see
 My grandchild on my knees before I
 die:
 And I have set my heart upon a
 match.
 Now therefore look to Dora; she is
 well
 To look to; thrifty too beyond her
 age.
 She is my brother's daughter: he
 and I
 Had once hard words, and parted,
 and he died
 In foreign lands; but for his sake I
 bred

His daughter Dora: take her for
 your wife;
 For I have wish'd this marriage,
 night and day,
 For many years." But William
 answer'd short;
 "I cannot marry Dora; by my life,
 I will not marry Dora." Then the
 old man
 Was wroth, and doubled up his
 hands, and said:
 "You will not, boy! you dare to
 answer thus!
 But in my time a father's word was
 law,
 And so it shall be now for me.
 Look to it;
 Consider, William: take a month to
 think,
 And let me have an answer to my
 wish;
 Or, by the Lord that made me, you
 shall pack,
 And never more darken my doors
 again."
 But William answer'd madly; bit
 his lips,
 And broke away. The more he
 look'd at her
 The less he liked her; and his ways
 were harsh;
 But Dora bore them meekly. Then
 before
 The month was out he left his
 father's house,
 And hired himself to work within the
 fields;
 And half in love, half spite, he woo'd
 and wed
 A labourer's daughter, Mary Morrison.
 Then, when the bells were ringing,
 Allan call'd
 His niece and said: "My girl, I
 love you well;
 But if you speak with him that was
 my son,
 Or change a word with her he calls
 his wife,
 My home is none of yours. My will
 is law."
 And Dora promised, being meek.
 She thought,
 'It cannot be: my uncle's mind will
 change!'

And days went on, and there was
 born a boy
 To William ; then distresses came
 on him ;
 And day by day he pass'd his father's
 gate,
 Heart-broken, and his father help'd
 him not.
 But Dora stored what little she could
 save,
 And sent it them by stealth, nor did
 they know
 Who sent it ; till at last a fever seized
 On William, and in harvest time he
 died.
 Then Dora went to Mary. Mary
 sat
 And look'd with tears upon her boy,
 and thought
 Hard things of Dora. Dora came
 and said :
 " I have obey'd my uncle until
 now,
 And I have sinn'd, for it was all thro'
 me
 This evil came on William at the first.
 But, Mary, for the sake of him that's
 gone,
 And for your sake, the woman that
 he chose,
 And for this orphan, I am come to
 you ;
 You know there has not been for
 these five years
 So full a harvest : let me take the boy,
 And I will set him in my uncle's eye
 Among the wheat ; that when his
 heart is glad
 Of the full harvest, he may see the
 boy,
 And bless him for the sake of him
 that's gone."
 And Dora took the child, and went
 her way
 Across the wheat, and sat upon a
 mound
 That was unsown, where many
 poppies grew.
 Far off the farmer came into the
 field
 And spied her not ; for none of all
 his men
 Dare tell him Dora waited with the
 child ;

And Dora would have risen and gone
 to him,
 But her heart fail'd her ; and the
 reapers reap'd,
 And the sun fell, and all the land
 was dark.
 But when the morrow came, she
 rose and took
 The child once more, and sat upon
 the mound ;
 And made a little wreath of all the
 flowers
 That grew about, and tied it round
 his hat
 To make him pleasing in her uncle's
 eye.
 Then when the farmer pass'd into the
 field
 He spied her, and he left his men at
 work,
 And came and said : " Where were
 you yesterday ?
 Whose child is that ! What are you
 doing here ? "
 So Dora cast her eyes upon the ground,
 And answered softly, " This is
 William's child ! "
 " And did I not," said Allan, " did I
 not
 Forbid you, Dora ? " Dora said
 again ;
 " Do with me as you will, but take
 the child
 And bless him for the sake of him
 that's gone ! "
 And Allan said, " I see it is a trick
 Got up betwixt you and the woman
 there.
 I must be taught my duty, and by
 you !
 You knew my word was law, and yet
 you dared
 To slight it. Well—for I will take
 the boy ;
 But go you hence, and never see me
 more."
 So saying, he took the boy, that
 cried aloud
 And struggled hard. The wreath
 of flowers fell
 At Dora's feet. She bow'd upon her
 hands,
 And the boy's cry came to her from
 the field,

More and more distant. She bow'd down her head,
 Remembering the day when first she came,
 And all the things that had been. She bow'd down
 And wept in secret; and the reapers reap'd,
 And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.
 Then Dora went to Mary's house, and stood
 Upon the threshold. Mary saw the boy
 Was not with Dora. She broke out in praise
 To God, that help'd her in her widow-hood.
 And Dora said, "My uncle took the boy;
 But, Mary, let me live and work with you:
 He says that he will never see me more."
 Then answer'd Mary, "This shall never be,
 That thou shouldst take my trouble on thyself:
 And, now I think, he shall not have the boy,
 For he will teach him hardness, and to slight
 His mother; therefore thou and I will go,
 And I will have my boy, and bring him home;
 And I will beg of him to take thee back;
 But if he will not take thee back again,
 Then thou and I will live within one house,
 And work for William's child, until he grows
 Of age to help us."
 So the women kiss'd
 Each other, and set out, and reach'd the farm.
 The door was off the latch: they peep'd, and saw
 The boy set up betwixt his grandsire's knees,
 Who thrust him in the hollows of his arm,
 And clapt him on the hands and on the cheeks,
 Like one that loved him; and the lad stretch'd out
 And babbled for the golden seal, that hung
 From Allan's watch, and sparkled by the fire.
 Then they came in: but when the boy beheld
 His mother, he cried out to come to her:
 And Allan set him down, and Mary said:
 "O Father!—if you let me call you so—
 I never came a-begging for myself, Or William, or this child; but now I come
 For Dora: take her back; she loves you well.
 O Sir, when William died, he died at peace
 With all men; for I ask'd him, and he said,
 He could not ever rue his marrying me—
 I had been a patient wife: but, Sir, he said
 That he was wrong to cross his father thus:
 'God bless him!' he said, 'and may he never know
 The troubles I have gone thro'!' Then he turn'd
 His face and pass'd—unhappy that I am!
 But now, Sir, let me have my boy, for you
 Will make him hard, and he will learn to slight
 His father's memory; and take Dora back,
 And let all this be as it was before."
 So Mary said, and Dora hid her face
 By Mary. There was silence in the room;
 And all at once the old man burst in sobs:—
 I have been to blame—to blame.
 I have kill'd my son.
 I have kill'd him—but I loved him—my dear son.

May God forgive me!—I have been
to blame.

Kiss me, my children."

Then they clung about
The old man's neck, and kiss'd him
many times.

And all the man was broken with
remorse;

And all his love came back a hundred-
fold;

And for three hours he sobb'd o'er
William's child,

Thinking of William.

So those four abode
Within one house together; and as
years

Went forward, Mary took another
mate;

But Dora lived unmarried till her
death.

AUDLEY COURT

"THE Bull, the Fleece are cramm'd,
and not a room

For love or money. Let us picnic
there

At Audley Court."

I spoke, while Audley feast
Humm'd like a hive all round the
narrow quay,

To Francis, with a basket on his arm,
To Francis just alighted from the
boat,

And breathing of the sea. "With
all my heart,"

Said Francis. Then we shoulder'd
thro' the swarm,

And rounded by the stillness of the
beach

To where the bay runs up its latest
horn.

We left the dying ebb that faintly
lipp'd

The flat red granite; so by many a
sweep

Of meadow smooth from aftermath
we reach'd

The griffin-guarded gates, and pass'd
thro' all

The pillar'd dusk of sounding sycam-
ores,

And cross'd the garden to the gar-
dener's lodge,

With all its casements bedded, and
its walls

And chimneys muffled in the leafy
vine.

There, on a slope of orchard,
Francis laid

A damask napkin wrought with horse
and hound,

Brought out a dusky loaf that smelt
of home,

And, half-cut-down, a pasty costly-
made,

Where quail and pigeon, lark and
leveret lay,

Like fossils of the rock, with golden
yolks

Imbedded and injellied; last, with
these,

A flask of cider from his father's vats,
Prime, which I knew; and so we
sat and eat

And talk'd old matters over; who
was dead,

Who married, who was like to be,
and how

The races went, and who would rent
the hall:

Then touch'd upon the game, how
scarce it was

This season; glancing thence, dis-
cuss'd the farm,

The fourfield system, and the price
of grain;

And struck upon the corn-laws,
where we split,

And came again together on the king
With heated faces; till he laugh'd
aloud;

And, while the blackbird on the pippin
hung

To hear him, clapt his hand in mine
and sang—

"Oh! who would fight and march
and countermarch,

Be shot for sixpence in a battle-field,
And shovell'd up into a bloody trench

Where no one knows? but let me live
my life.

"Oh! who would cast and balance
at a desk,

Perch'd like a crow upon a three-legg'd
stool,

Till all his juice is dried, and all his joints

Are full of chalk? but let me live my life.

"Who'd serve the state? for if I carved my name

Upon the cliffs that guard my native land,

I might as well have traced it in the sands;

The sea wastes all: but let me live my life.

'Oh! who would love? I woo'd a woman once,

But she was sharper than an eastern wind,

And all my heart turn'd from her, as a thorn

Turns from the sea: but let me live my life."

He sang his song, and I replied with mine:

I found it in a volume, all of songs, Knock'd down to me, when old Sir Robert's pride,

His books—the more the pity, so I said—

Came to the hammer here in March—and this—

I set the words, and added names I knew.

"Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, sleep, and dream of me:

Sleep, Ellen, folded in thy sister's arm,

And sleeping, haply dream her arm is mine.

"Sleep, Ellen, folded in Emilia's arm;

Emilia, fairer than all else but thou,

For thou art fairer than all else that is.

"Sleep, breathing health and peace upon her breast:

Sleep, breathing love and trust against her lip:

I go to-night: I come to-morrow morn.

"I go, but I return: I would I were

The pilot of the darkness and the dream.

Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, love, and dream of me."

So sang we each to either, Francis Hale,

The father's son who lived across the bay,

My friend; and I, that having where-withal,

And in the fallow leisure of my life A rolling stone of here and every-

where, Did what I would; but ere the night

we rose And saunter'd home beneath a moon,

that, just In crescent, dimly rain'd about the

leaf Twilights of airy silver, till we reach'd

The limit of the hills; and as we sank

From rock to rock upon the glooming quay,

The town was hush'd beneath us: lower down

The bay was oily-calm; the harbour-buoy

With one green sparkle ever and anon

Dipt by itself, and we were glad at heart.

WALKING TO THE MAIL

John. I'm glad I walk'd. How fresh the meadows look

Above the river, and, but a month ago,

The whole hill-side was redder than a fox,

Is yon plantation where this byway joins

The turnpike?

James. Yes.

John. And when does this come by?

James. The mail? At one o'clock.

John. What is it now?

James. A quarter to.

John. Whose house is that I see?

No, not the County Member's with the vane:

Up higher with the yewtree by it, and half

A score of gables.

James. That? Sir Edward

Head's: But he's abroad: the place is to be sold.

John. Oh, his. He was not broken.

James. No, sir, he,
Vex'd with a morbid devil in his blood

That veil'd the world with jaundice,
hid his face

From all men, and commercing with himself,

He lost the sense that handles daily life—

That keeps us all in order more or less—

And sick of home went overseas for change.

John. And whither?

James. Nay, who knows? he's here and there.

But let him go; his devil goes with him,

As well as with his tenant, Jocky Dawes.

John. What's that?

James. You saw the man—
on Monday, was it?—

There by the humpback'd willow;
half stands up

And bristles; half has fall'n and made a bridge;

And there he caught the younker tickling trout—

Caught in *flagrante*—what's the Latin word?—

Delicto: but his house, for so they say,
Was haunted with a jolly ghost, that shook

The curtains, whined in lobbies, tap'd at doors,

And rummaged like a rat: no servant stay'd:

The farmer vext packs up his beds and chairs,

And all his household stuff; and with his boy

Betwixt his knees, his wife upon the tilt,

Sets out, and meets a friend who hails him, "What!

You're flitting!" "Yes, we're flitting," says the ghost.

(For they had pack'd the thing among the beds,)

"Oh well," says he, "you flitting with us too—

Jack, turn the horses' heads and home again."

John. He left *his* wife behind; for so I heard.

James. He left her, yes. I met my lady once:

A woman like a butt, and harsh as crabs.

John. Oh yet but I remember, ten years back—

'Tis now at least ten years—and then she was—

You could not light upon a sweeter thing:

A body slight and round, and like a pear

In growing, modest eyes, a hand, a foot

Lessening in perfect cadence, and a skin

As clean and white as privet when it flowers.

James. Ay, ay, the blossom fades, and they that loved

At first like dove and dove were cat and dog.

She was the daughter of a cottager, Out of her sphere. What betwixt

shame and pride,

New things and old, himself and her, she sour'd

To what she is: a nature never kind!

Like men, like manners: like breeds like, they say.

Kind nature is the best: those manners next

That fit us like a nature second-hand; Which are indeed the manners of the

great.

John. But I had heard it was this bill that past,

And fear of change at home, that drove him hence.

James. That was the last drop in the cup of gall.

I once was near him, when his bailiff brought

A Chartist pike. You should have seen him wince

As from a venomous thing: he thought himself

A mark for all, and shudder'd, lest a
cry
Should break his sleep by night, and
his nice eyes
Should see the raw mechanic's bloody
thumbs
Sweat on his blazon'd chairs ; but,
sir, you know
That these two parties still divide
the world—
Of those that want, and those that
have : and still
The same old sore breaks out from
age to age
With much the same result. Now I
myself,
A Tory to the quick, was as a boy
Destructive, when I had not what I
would.
I was at school—a college in the
South :
There lived a flayflint near ; we stole
his fruit,
His hens, his eggs ; but there was law
for us ;
We paid in person. He had a sow,
sir. She,
With meditative grunts of much
content,
Lay great with pig, wallowing in sun
and mud.
By night we dragg'd her to the college
tower
From her warm bed, and up the cork-
screw stair
With hand and rope we haled the
groaning sow,
And on the leads we kept her till she
pigg'd.
Large range of prospect had the
mother sow,
And but for daily loss of one she
loved,
As one by one we took them—but for
this—
As never sow was higher in this
world—
Might have been happy : but what
lot is pure ?
We took them all, till she was left
alone
Upon her tower, the Niobe of swine,
And so return'd unfarrow'd to her sty.
John. They found you out ?

T.P.W.

James. Not they.
John. Well—after all—
What know we of the secret of a
man ?
His nerves were wrong. What ails
us, who are sound,
That we should mimic this raw fool
the world,
Which charts us all in its coarse blacks
or whites,
As ruthless as a baby with a worm,
As cruel as a schoolboy ere he grows
To Pity—more from ignorance than
will.
But put your best foot forward, or
I fear
That we shall miss the mail : and
here it comes
With five at top : as quaint a four-in-
hand
As you shall see—three pyebalds and

EDWIN MORRIS ; OR, THE LAKE

O ME, my pleasant rambles by the
lake,
My sweet, wild, fresh three quarters
of a year,
My one Oasis in the dust and drouth
Of city life ! I was a sketcher then :
See here, my doing : curves of moun-
tain, bridge,
Boat, island, ruins of a castle, built
When men knew how to build, upon a
rock,
With turrets lichen-gilded like a rock :
And here, new-comers in an ancient
hold,
New-comers from the Mersey, mil-
lionaires,
Here lived the Hills—a Tudor-chim-
nied bulk
Of mellow brickwork on an isle of
bowers.

O me, my pleasant rambles by the
lake
With Edwin Morris and with Edward
Bull
The curate ; he was fatter than his
cure.

But Edwin Morris, he that knew
the names,
Long learned names of agaric, moss
and fern,
Who forged a thousand theories of the
rocks,
Who taught me how to skate, to row,
to swim,
Who read me rhymes elaborately
good,
His own—I call'd him Crichton, for
he seem'd
All-perfect, finish'd to the finger nail.

And once I ask'd him of his early
life,
And his first passion ; and he an-
swer'd me ;
And well his words became him : was
he not
A full-cell'd honeycomb of eloquence
Stored from all flowers ? Poet-like
he spoke.

“ My love for Nature is as old as I ;
But thirty moons, one honeymoon to
that,
And three rich sennights more, my
love for her.
My love for Nature and my love for
her,
Of different ages, like twin-sisters
grew,
Twin-sisters differently beautiful.
To some full music rose and sank
the sun,
And some full music seem'd to move
and change
With all the varied changes of the
dark,
And either twilight and the day be-
tween ;
For daily hope fulfill'd, to rise again
Revolving toward fulfilment, made it
sweet
To walk, to sit, to sleep, to wake, to
breathe.”

Or this or something like to this he
spoke,
Then said the fat-faced curate Ed-
ward Bull,
“ I take it, God made the woman
for the man,

And for the good and increase of the
world.
A pretty face is well, and this is well,
To have a dame indoors, that trims
us up,
And keeps us tight ; but these unreal
ways
Seem but the theme of writers, and
indeed
Worn threadbare. Man is made of
solid stuff.
I say, God made the woman for the
man,
And for the good and increase of the
world.”

“ Parson,” said I, “ you pitch the
pipe too low :
But I have sudden touches, and can
run
My faith beyond my practice into
his :
Tho' if, in dancing after Letty Hill,
I do not hear the bells upon my cap,
I scarce hear other music : yet say on.
What should one give to light on such
a dream ? ”
I ask'd him half-sardonically.

“ Give ? ”
Give all thou art,” he answer'd, and
a light
Of laughter dimpled in his swarthy
cheek ;
“ I would have hid her needle in my
heart,
To save her little finger from a
scratch
No deeper than the skin : my ears
could hear
Her lightest breaths : her least
remark was worth
The experience of the wise. I went
and came ;
Her voice fled always thro' the sum-
mer land ;
I spoke her name alone. Thrice-
happy days !
The flower of each, those moments
when we met,
The crown of all, we met to part no
more.”

Were not his words delicious, I a
beast
To take them as I did? but some-
thing jarr'd;
Whether he spoke too largely; that
there seem'd
A touch of something false, some self-
conceit,
Or over-smoothness: howsoe'er it was,
He scarcely hit my humour, and I
said:

"Friend Edwin, do not think your-
self alone
Of all men happy. Shall not I love to
me,
As in the Latin song I learnt at school,
Sneeze out a full God-bless-you right
and left?
But you can talk: yours is a kindly
vein:
I have, I think,—Heaven knows—as
much within;
Have, or should have, but for a
thought or two,
That like a purple beech among the
greens
Looks out of place: 'tis from no want
in her:
It is my shyness, or my self-distrust,
Or something of a wayward modern
mind
Dissecting passion. Time will set
me right."

So spoke I knowing not the things
that were.
Then said the fat-faced curate,
Edward Bull:
"God made the woman for the use of
man,
And for the good and increase of the
world."
And I and Edwin laugh'd; and now
we paused
About the windings of the marge to
hear
The soft wind blowing over meadowy
holms
And alders, garden-isles; and now we
left
The clerk behind us, I and he, and
ran

By ripply shallows of the lipping
lake,
Delighted with the freshness and the
sound.

But, when the bracken rusted on
their crags,
My suit had wither'd, nipt to death
by him
That was a God, and is a lawyer's
clerk,
The rentroll Cupid of our rainy isles.
'Tis true, we met; one hour I had, no
more:
She sent a note, the seal an *Elle
vous suit*,
The close "Your Letty, only yours;"
and this
Thrice underscored. The friendly
mist of morn
Clung to the lake. I boated over, ran
My craft aground, and heard with
beating heart
The Sweet-Gale rustle round the
shelving keel;
And out I stept, and up I crept: she
moved,
Like Proserpine in Enna, gathering
flowers:
Then low and sweet I whistled thrice;
and she,
She turn'd, we closed, we kiss'd,
swore faith, I breathed
In some new planet: a silent cousin
stole
Upon us and departed: "Leave" she
cried,
"O Leave me!" "Never, dearest,
never: here
I brave the worst:" and while we
stood like fools
Embracing, all at once a score of pugs.
And poodles yell'd within, and out
they came
Trustees and Aunts and Uncles.
"What, with him!
Go" (shrill'd the cottonspinning
chorus) "him!"
I choked. Again they shriek'd the
burthen "Him!"
Again with hands of wild rejection
"Go!"
Girl, get you in!" She went—and
in one month

They wedded her to sixty thousand
 pounds,
 To lands in Kent and messuages in
 York,
 And slight Sir Robert with his watery
 smile
 And educated whisker. But for me,
 They set an ancient creditor to work :
 It seems I broke a close with force
 and arms :
 There came a mystic token from the
 king
 To greet the sheriff, needless cour-
 tesy !
 I read, and fled by night, and flying
 turn'd :
 Her taper glimmer'd in the lake
 below :
 I turn'd once more, close-button'd to
 the storm ;
 So left the place, left Edwin, nor
 have seen
 Him since, nor heard of her, nor cared
 to hear.

 Nor cared to hear ? perhaps : yet
 long ago
 I have pardon'd little Letty ; not in-
 deed,
 It may be, for her own dear sake but
 this,
 She seems a part of those fresh days
 to me ;
 For in the dust and drouth of London
 life
 She moves among my visions of the
 lake,
 While the prime swallow dips his
 wing, or then
 While the gold-lily blows, and over-
 head
 The light cloud smoulders on the
 summer crag.

ST. SIMEON STYLITES

ALTHO' I be the basest of mankind,
 From scalp to sole one slough and
 crust of sin,
 Unfit for earth, unfit for heaven,
 scarce meet
 For troops of devils, mad with blas-
 phemy,

I will not cease to grasp the hope I
 hold
 Of saintdom, and to clamour, mourn
 and sob,
 Battering the gates of heaven with
 storms of prayer,
 Have mercy, Lord, and take away
 my sin.
 Let this avail, just, dreadful,
 mighty God,
 This not be all in vain, that thrice
 ten years,
 Thrice multiplied by superhuman
 pangs,
 In hungers and in thirsts, fevers and
 cold,
 In coughs, aches, stitches, ulcerous
 throes and cramps,
 A sign betwixt the meadow and the
 cloud,
 Patient on this tall pillar I have borne
 Rain, wind, frost, heat, hail, damp,
 and sleet, and snow ;
 And I had hoped that ere this period
 closed
 Thou wouldst have caught me up
 into thy rest,
 Denying not these weather-beaten
 limbs
 The meed of saints, the white robe
 and the palm.
 O take the meaning, Lord : I do
 not breathe,
 Not whisper, any murmur of com-
 plaint.
 Pain heap'd ten-hundred-fold to this,
 were still
 Less burthen, by ten-hundred-fold,
 to bear,
 Than were those lead-like tons of sin,
 that crush'd
 My spirit flat before thee.

O Lord, Lord,

Thou knowest I bore this better at the
 first,
 For I was strong and hale of body
 then ;
 And tho' my teeth, which now are
 dropt away,
 Would chatter with the cold, and all
 my beard
 Was tagg'd with icy fringes in the
 moon,

Irown'd the whoopings of the owl with sound	For not alone this pillar-punish- ment,
Of pious hymns and psalms, and sometimes saw	Not this alone I bore : but while I lived
An angel stand and watch me, as I sang.	In the white convent down the valley there,
Now am I feeble grown ; my end draws nigh ;	For many weeks about my loins I wore
I hope my end draws nigh : half deaf I am,	The rope that haled the buckets from the well,
So that I scarce can hear the people hum	Twisted as tight as I could knot the noose ;
About the column's base, and almost blind,	And spake not of it to a single soul, Until the ulcer, eating thro' my skin,
And scarce can recognise the fields I know ;	Betray'd my secret penance, so that all
And both my thighs are rotted with the dew ;	My brethren marvell'd greatly. More than this
Yet cease I not to clamour and to cry,	I bore, whereof, O God, thou knowest all.
While my stiff spine can hold my weary head,	Three winters, that my soul might grow to thee,
Till all my limbs drop piecemeal from the stone,	I lived up there on yonder mountain side.
Have mercy, mercy : take away my sin.	My right leg chain'd into the crag, I lay
O Jesus, if thou wilt not save my soul,	Pent in a roofless close of ragged stones ;
Who may be saved ? who is it may be saved ?	Inswathed sometimes in wandering mist, and twice
Who may be made a saint, if I fail here ?	Black'd with thy branding thunder, and sometimes
Show me the man hath suffer'd more than I.	Sucking the damps for drink, and eating not,
For did not all thy martyrs die one death ?	Except the spare chance-gift of those that came
For either they were stoned, or crucified,	To touch my body and be heal'd, and live :
Or burn'd in fire, or boil'd in oil, or sawn	And they say then that I work'd miracles,
In twain beneath the ribs ; but I die here	Whereof my fame is loud amongst mankind,
To-day, and whole years long, a life of death.	Cured lameness, palsies, cancers. Thou, O God,
Bear witness, if I could have found a way	Knowest alone whether this was or no.
(And heedfully I sifted all my thought)	Have mercy, mercy ; cover all my sin.
More slowly-painful to subdue this home	Then, that I might be more alone with thee,
Of sin, my flesh, which I despise and hate,	Three years I lived upon a pillar, high
I had not stinted practice, O my God.	Six cubits, and three years on one of twelve ;

And twice three years I crouch'd on
 one that rose
 Twenty by measure ; last of all, I
 grew
 Twice ten long weary weary years
 to this,
 That numbers forty cubits from the
 soil.
 I think that I have borne as much
 as this—
 Or else I dream—and for so long a
 time,
 If I may measure time by yon slow
 light,
 And this high dial, which my sorrow
 crowns—
 So much—even so.
 And yet I know not well,
 For that the evil ones come here, and
 say,
 “ Fall down, O Simeon : thou hast
 suffer'd long
 For ages and for ages ! ” then they
 prate
 Of penances I cannot have gone
 thro',
 Perplexing me with lies ; and oft I
 fall,
 Maybe for months, in such blind
 lethargies,
 That Heaven, and Earth, and Time
 are choked.
 But yet
 Bethink thee, Lord, while thou and
 all the saints
 Enjoy themselves in heaven, and
 men on earth
 House in the shade of comfortable
 roofs,
 Sit with their wives by fires, eat whole-
 some food,
 And wear warm clothes, and even
 beasts have stalls,
 I, 'tween the spring and downfall of
 the light,
 Bow down one thousand and two
 hundred times,
 To Christ, the Virgin Mother, and the
 Saints ;
 Or in the night, after a little sleep,
 I wake : the chill stars sparkle ; I am
 wet
 With drenching dews, or stiff with
 crackling frost.

I wear an undress'd goatskin on my
 back ;
 A grazing iron collar grinds my neck ;
 And in my weak, lean arms I lift the
 cross,
 And strive and wrestle with thee till
 I die :
 O mercy, mercy ! wash away my sin.
 O Lord, thou knowest what a man
 I am ;
 A sinful man, conceived and born in
 sin :
 'Tis their own doing ; this is none of
 mine ;
 Lay it not to me. Am I to blame for
 this,
 That here come those that worship
 me ? Ha ! ha !
 They think that I am somewhat.
 What am I ?
 The silly people take me for a saint,
 And bring me offerings of fruit and
 flowers :
 And I, in truth (thou wilt bear witness
 here)
 Have all in all endured as much, and
 more
 Than many just and holy men, whose
 names
 Are register'd and calendar'd for
 saints.
 Good people, you do ill to kneel to
 me.
 What is it I can have done to merit
 this ?
 I am a sinner viler than you all.
 It may be I have wrought some
 miracles,
 And cured some halt and maim'd ;
 but what of that ?
 It may be, no one, even among the
 saints,
 May match his pains with mine ; but
 what of that ?
 Yet do not rise : for you may look on
 me,
 And in your looking you may kneel
 to God.
 Speak ! is there any of you halt or
 maim'd ?
 I think you know I have some power
 with Heaven
 From my long penance : let him speak
 his wish.

Yes, I can heal him. Power goes
 forth from me.
 They say that they are heal'd. Ah,
 hark! they shout
 "St. Simeon Stylites." Why, if so,
 God reaps a harvest in me. O my
 soul,
 God reaps a harvest in thee. If this
 be,
 Can I work miracles and not be saved?
 This is not told of any. They were
 saints.
 It cannot be but that I shall be saved;
 Yea, crown'd a saint. They shout,
 "Behold a saint!"
 And lower voices saint me from above.
 Courage, St. Simeon! This dull
 chrysalis
 Cracks into shining wings, and hope
 ere death
 Spreads more and more and more,
 that God hath now
 Sponged and made blank of crimeful
 record all
 My mortal archives.
 O my sons, my sons,
 I, Simeon of the pillar, by surname
 Stylites, among men; I, Simeon,
 The watcher on the column till the
 end;
 I, Simeon, whose brain the sunshine
 bakes;
 I, whose bald brows in silent hours be-
 come
 Unnaturally hoar with rime, do now
 From my high nest of penance here
 proclaim
 That Pontius and Iscariot by my
 side
 Show'd like fair seraphs. On the
 coals I lay,
 A vessel full of sin: all hell beneath
 Made me boil over. Devils pluck'd
 my sleeve;
 Abaddon and Asmodeus caught at
 me.
 I smote them with the cross; they
 swarm'd again
 In bed like monstrous apes they
 crush'd my chest:
 They flapp'd my light out as I read;
 I saw
 Their faces grow between me and my
 book:
 With colt-like whinny and with
 hoggish whine
 They burst my prayer. Yet this
 way was left,
 And by this way I 'scaped them.
 Mortify
 Your flesh, like me, with scourges and
 with thorns;
 Smite, shrink not, spare not. If it
 may be, fast
 Whole Lents, and pray. I hardly,
 with slow steps,
 With slow, faint steps, and much
 exceeding pain,
 Have scrambled past those pits of
 fire, that still
 Sing in mine ears. But yield not me
 the praise:
 God only thro' his bounty hath
 thought fit,
 Among the powers and princes of this
 world,
 To make me an example to man-
 kind,
 Which few can reach to. Yet I do
 not say
 But that a time may come—yea, even
 now,
 Now, now, his footsteps smite the
 threshold stairs
 Of life—I say, that time is at the
 doors
 When you may worship me without
 reproach;
 For I will leave my relics in your
 land,
 And you may carve a shrine about
 my dust,
 And burn a fragrant lamp before my
 bones,
 When I am gather'd to the glorious
 saints.
 While I spake then, a sting of
 shrewdest pain
 Ran shrivelling thro' me, and a
 cloudlike change,
 In passing, with a grosser film made
 thick
 These heavy, horny eyes. The end!
 the end!
 Surely the end! What's here? a
 shape, a shade,
 A flash of light. Is that the angel
 there

THE TALKING OAK

That holds a crown ? Come, blessed brother, come.
 I know thy glittering face. I waited long ;
 My brows are ready. What ! deny it now ?
 Nay, draw, draw, draw nigh. So I clutch it. Christ !
 'Tis gone : 'tis here again ; the crown ! the crown !
 So now 'tis fitted on and grows to me,
 And from it melt the dews of Paradise,
 Sweet ! sweet ! spikenard, and balm, and frankincense.
 Ah ! let me not be fool'd, sweet saints : I trust
 That I am whole, and clean, and meet for Heaven.
 Speak, if there be a priest, a man of God,
 Among you there, and let him presently
 Approach, and lean a ladder on the shaft,
 And climbing up into my airy home,
 Deliver me the blessed sacrament ;
 For by the warning of the Holy Ghost,
 I prophesy that I shall die to-night,
 A quarter before twelve.
 But thou, O Lord,
 Aid all this foolish people ; let them take
 Example, pattern : lead them to thy light.

The love, that makes me thrice a man,
 Could hope itself return'd ;
 To yonder oak within the field
 I spoke without restraint,
 And with a larger faith appeal'd
 Than Papist unto Saint.
 For oft I talk'd with him apart,
 And told him of my choice,
 Until he plagiarised a heart,
 And answer'd with a voice.
 Tho' what he whisper'd, under Heaven
 None else could understand ;
 I found him garrulously given,
 A babbler in the land.
 But since I heard him make reply
 Is many a weary hour ;
 'Twere well to question him, and try
 If yet he keeps the power.
 Hail, hidden to the knees in fern,
 Broad Oak of Sumner-chace,
 Whose topmost branches can discern
 The roofs of Sumner-place !
 Say thou, whereon I carved her name,
 If ever maid or spouse,
 As fair as my Olivia, came
 To rest beneath thy boughs.—
 " O Walter, I have shelter'd here
 Whatever maiden grace
 The good old Summers, year by year,
 Made ripe in Sumner-chace :
 " Old Summers, when the monk was fat,
 And, issuing shorn and sleek,
 Would twist his girdle tight, and pat
 The girls upon the cheek,
 " Ere yet, in scorn of Peter's-pence,
 And number'd bead, and shrift,
 Bluff Harry broke into the spence,
 And turn'd the cowls adrift :
 " And I have seen some score of those
 Fresh faces, that would thrive

THE TALKING OAK

ONCE more the gate behind me falls ;
 Once more before my face
 I see the moulder'd Abbey-walls,
 That stand within the chace.

Beyond the lodge the city lies,
 Beneath its drift of smoke ;
 And ah ! with what delighted eyes
 I turn to yonder oak.

For when my passion first began,
 Ere that, which in me burn'd,

When his man-minded offset rose
To chase the deer at five;

I hold them exquisitely knit,
But far too spare of flesh."

"And all that from the town would
stroll,
Till that wild wind made work
In which the gloomy brewer's soul
Went by me, like a stork:

Oh, hide thy knotted knees in fern,
And overlook the chase;
And from thy topmost branch discern
The roofs of Summer-place.

"The slight she-slips of loyal blood,
And others, passing praise,
Strait-laced, but all-too-full in bud
For puritanic stays:

But thou, whereon I carved her name,
That oft hast heard my vows,
Declare when last Olivia came
To sport beneath thy boughs.

"And I have shadow'd many a group
Of beauties, that were born
In teacup-times of hood and hoop,
Or while the patch was worn;

"O yesterday, you know, the fair
Was holden at the town;
Her father left his good arm-chair,
And rode his hunter down.

"And, leg and arm with love-knots
gay,
About me leap'd and laugh'd
The modish Cupid of the day,
And shrill'd his tinsel shaft.

"And with him Albert came on his.
I look'd at him with joy:
As cowslip unto oxlip is,
So seems she to the boy.

"I swear (and else may insects prick
Each leaf into a gall)
This girl, for whom your heart is sick,
Is three times worth them all;

"An hour had past—and, sitting
straight
Within the low-wheel'd chaise,
Her mother trundled to the gate
Behind the dappled grays.

"For those and theirs, by Nature's
law,
Have faded long ago;
But in these latter springs I saw
Your own Olivia blow,

"But, as for her, she stay'd at home,
And on the roof she went,
And down the way you use to come,
She look'd with discontent.

"From when she gamboll'd on the
greens,
A baby-germ, to when
The maiden blossoms of her teens
Could number five from ten.

"She left the novel half-uncut
Upon the rosewood shelf;
She left the new piano shut:
She could not please herself.

"I swear, by leaf, and wind, and rain,
(And hear me with thine ears,)
That, tho' I circle in the grain
Five hundred rings of years—

"Then ran she, gamesome as the colt,
And livelier than a lark
She sent her voice thro' all the holt
Before her, and the park.

"Yet, since I first could cast a shade,
Did never creature pass
So slightly, musically made,
So light upon the grass:

"A light wind chased her on the wing,
And in the chase grew wild,
As close as might be would he cling
About the darling child:

"For as to fairies, that will flit
To make the greensward fresh,

"But light as any wind that blows
So fleetly did she stir,
The flower, she touch'd on, dipt and
rose,
And turn'd to look at her.

- " And here she came, and round me
play'd,
And sang to me the whole
Of those three stanzas that you made
About my ' giant bole ; "
- " And in a fit of frolic mirth
She strove to span my waist :
Alas, I was so broad of girth,
I could not be embraced.
- " I wish'd myself the fair youn
beeche,
That here beside me stands,
That round me, clasping each in each,
She might have lock'd her hands.
- " Yet seem'd the pressure thrice as
sweet
As woodbine's fragile hold,
Or when I feel about my feet
The berried briony fold."
- O muffle round thy knees with fern,
And shadow Summer-chace !
Long may thy topmost branch dis-
cern
The roofs of Sumner-place !
- But tell me, did she read the name
I carved with many vows
When last with throbbing heart I
came
To rest beneath thy boughs ?
- " O yes, she wander'd round and
round
These knotted knees of mine,
And found, and kiss'd the name she
found,
And sweetly murmur'd thine.
- " A teardrop trembled from its
source,
And down my surface crept.
My sense of touch is something coarse,
But I believe she wept.
- " Then flush'd her cheek with rosy
light,
She glanced across the plain ;
But not a creature was in sight :
She kiss'd me once again,
- " Her kisses were so close and kind,
That, trust me on my word,
Hard wood I am, and wrinkled rind,
But yet my sap was stirr'd :
- " And even into my inmost rind
A pleasure I discern'd,
Like those blind motions of the
Spring,
That show the year is turn'd.
- " Thrice-happy he that may caress
The ringlet's waving balm—
The cushions of whose touch may
press
The maiden's tender palm.
- " I, rooted here among the groves,
But languidly adjust
My vapid vegetable loves
With anthers and with dust :
- " For ah ! my friend, the days were
brief
Whereof the poets talk,
When that, which breathes within the
leaf,
Could slip its bark and walk.
- " But could I, as in times foregone,
From spray, and branch, and stem,
Have suck'd and gather'd into one
The life that spreads in them,
- " She had not found me so remiss ;
But lightly issuing thro',
I would have paid her kiss for kiss
With usury thereto."
- O flourish high, with leafy towers,
And overlook the lea,
Pursue thy loves among the bowers,
But leave thou mine to me.
- O flourish, hidden deep in fern,
Old oak, I love thee well ;
A thousand thanks for what I learn
And what remains to tell.
- 'Tis little more : the day was warm.
At last, tired out with play,
She sank her head upon her arm,
And at my feet she lay.

"Her eyelids dropp'd their silken
eaves.

I breathed upon her eyes
Thro' all the summer of my leaves
A welcome mix'd with sighs.

"I took the swarming sound of life—
The music from the town—
The murmurs of the drum and fife
And hull'd them in my own.

"Sometimes I let a sunbeam slip,
To light her shaded eye;
A second flutter'd round her lip
Like a golden butterfly;

"A third would glimmer on her neck
To make the necklace shine;
Another slid, a sunny fleck,
From head to ankle fine.

"Then close and dark my arms I
spread,
And shadow'd all her rest—
Dropt dews upon her golden head,
An acorn in her breast.

"But in a pet she started up,
And pluck'd it out, and drew
My little oakling from the cup,
And flung him in the dew.

"And yet it was a graceful gift—
I felt a pang within
As when I see the woodman lift
His axe to slay my kin.

"I shook him down because he was
The finest on the tree.
He lies beside thee on the grass.
O kiss him once for me.

"O kiss him twice and thrice for me,
That have no lips to kiss,
For never yet was oak on lea
Shall grow so fair as this."

Step deeper yet in herb and fern,
Look further thro' the chace,
Spread upward till thy boughs discern
The front of Summer-place.

This fruit of thine by Love is blest,
That but a moment lay

Where fairer fruit of Love may rest
Some happy future day.

I kiss it twice, I kiss it thrice,
The warmth it thence shall win
To ripen life may magnetise
The baby-oak within.

But thou, while kingdoms overset,
Or lapse from hand to hand,
Thy leaf shall never fail, nor yet
Thine acorn in the land.

May never saw dismember thee,
Nor wielded axe disjoint,
Thou art the fairest-spoken tree
From here to Lizard-point.

O rock upon thy towery top
All throats that gurgle sweet!
All starry culmination drop
Balm-dews to bathe thy feet!

All grass of silky feather grow—
And while he sinks or swells
The full south-breeze around thee
blow
The sound of minster bells.

The fat earth feed thy branchy root,
That under deeply strikes!
The northern morning o'er thee shoot,
High up, in silver spikes!

Nor ever lightning char thy grain,
But, rolling as in sleep,
Low thunders bring the mellow rain,
That makes thee broad and deep!

And hear me swear a solemn oath,
That only by thy side
Will I to Olive plight my troth,
And gain her for my bride.

And when my marriage morn may
fall,
She, Dryad-like, shall wear
Alternate leaf and acorn-ball
In wreath about her hair.

And I will work in prose and rhyme,
And praise thee more in both
Than bard has honour'd beech or
lime,
Or that Thessalian growth,

In which the swarthy ringdove sat,
And mystic sentence spoke;
And more than England honours
that,

Thy famous brother-oak,

Wherein the younger Charles abode
Till all the paths were dim,
And far below the Roundhead rode,
And humm'd a surly hymn.

LOVE AND DUTY

Of love that never found his earthly
close,

What sequel? Streaming eyes and
breaking hearts?

Or all the same as if he had not been?

Not so. Shall Error in the round
of time

Still father Truth? O shall the
braggart shout

For some blind glimpse of freedom
work itself

Thro' madness, hated by the wise,
to law

System and empire? Sin itself be
found

The cloudy porch oft opening on the
Sun?

And only he, this wonder, dead, be-
come

Mere highway dust? or year by year
alone

Sit brooding in the ruins of a life,
Nightmare of youth, the spectre of
himself?

If this were thus, if this, indeed,
were all,

Better the narrow brain, the stony
heart,

The staring eye glazed o'er with sap-
less days,

The long mechanic paces to and fro
The set gray life, and apathetic end.
But am I not the nobler thro' thy
love?

O three times less unworthy! likewise
thou

Art more thro' Love, and greater
than thy years.

The Sun will run his orbit, and the
Moon

Her circle. Wait, and Love himself
will bring

The drooping flower of knowledge
changed to fruit

Of wisdom. Wait: my faith is large
in Time,

And that which shapes it to some per-
fect end.

Will some one say, then why not ill
for good?

Why took ye not your pastime? To
that man

My work shall answer, since I knew
the right

And did it; for a man is not as God,
But then most Godlike being most a
man.

—So let me think 'tis well for thee
and me—

Ill-fated that I am, what lot is

Whose foresight preaches peace, my
heart so slow

To feel it! For how hard it seem'd
to me,

When eyes, love-languid thro' half-
tears, would dwell

One earnest, earnest moment upon
mine,

Then not to dare to see! when thy
low voice,

Faltering, would break its syllables,
to keep

My own full-tuned,—hold passion in a
leash,

And not leap forth and fall about thy
neck,

And on thy bosom, (deep-desired
relief!)

Rain out the heavy mist of tears,
that weigh'd

Upon my brain, my senses and my
soul!

For Love himself took part against
himself

To warn us off, and Duty loved of
Love—

O this world's curse,—beloved but
hated—came

Like Death betwixt thy dear embrace
and mine,

And crying, "Who is this? behold
thy bride,"

She push'd me from thee.

If the sense is hard
 To alien ears, I did not speak to these—
 No, not to thee, but to thyself in me :
 Hard is my doom and thine : thou knowest it all.
 Could Love part thus ? was it not well to speak,
 To have spoken once ? It could not but be well.
 The slow sweet hours that bring us all things good,
 The slow sad hours that bring us all things ill,
 And all good things from evil, brought the night
 In which we sat together and alone,
 And to the want, that hollow'd all the heart,
 Gave utterance by the yearning of an eye,
 That burn'd upon its object thro' such tears
 As flow but once a life.
 The trance gave way
 To those caresses, when a hundred times
 In that last kiss, which never was the last,
 Farewell, like endless welcome, lived and died.
 Then follow'd counsel, comfort, and the words
 That make a man feel strong in speaking truth ;
 Till now the dark was worn, and overhead
 The lights of sunset and of sunrise mix'd
 In that brief night ; the summer night, that paused
 Among her stars to hear us ; stars that hung
 Love-charm'd to listen : all the wheels of Time
 Spun round in station, but the end had come.
 O then like those, who clench their nerves to rush
 Upon their dissolution, we two rose,
 There—closing like an individual life—
 In one blind cry of passion and of pain,

Like bitter accusation ev'n to death,
 Caught up the whole of love and utter'd it,
 And bade adieu for ever.
 Live—yet live—
 Shall sharpest pathos blight us, knowing all
 Life needs for life is possible to will—
 Live happy ; tend thy flowers ; be tended by
 My blessing ! Should my Shadow cross thy thoughts
 Too sadly for their peace, remand it thou
 For calmer hours to Memory's darkest hold,
 If not to be forgotten—not at once—
 Not all forgotten. Should it cross thy dreams,
 O might it come like one that looks content,
 With quiet eyes unfaithful to the truth,
 And point thee forward to a distant light,
 Or seem to lift a burthen from thy heart
 And leave thee frëer, till thou wake refresh'd,
 Then when the first low matin-chirp hath grown
 Full quire, and morning driv'n her plow of pearl
 Far furrowing into light the mounded rack,
 Beyond the fair green field and eastern

THE GOLDEN YEAR

WELL, you shall have that song which Leonard wrote :
 It was last summer on a tour in Wales :
 Old James was with me : we that day had been
 Up Snowdon ; and I wish'd for Leonard there,
 And found him in Llanberis : then we crost
 Between the lakes, and clamber'd half way up

The counter side ; and that same song of his
 He told me ; for I banter'd him, and swore
 They said he lived shut up within himself,
 A tongue-tied Poet in the feverous days,
 That, setting the *how much* before the *how*,
 Cry, like the daughters of the horse-leech, " Give,
 Cram us with all," but count not me the herd !
 To which " They call me what they will," he said :
 " But I was born too late : the fair new forms,
 That float about the threshold of an age,
 Like truths of Science waiting to be caught—
 Catch me who can, and make the catcher crown'd—
 Are taken by the forelock. Let it be.
 But if you care indeed to listen, hear
 These measured words, my work of yesternorn.
 " We sleep and wake and sleep, but all things move ;
 The Sun flies forward to his brother Sun ;
 The dark Earth follows wheel'd in her ellipse ;
 And human things returning on themselves
 Move onward, leading up the golden year.
 " Ah, tho' the times, when some new thought can bud,
 Are but as poets' seasons when they flower,
 Yet seas, that daily gain upon the shore,
 Have ebb and flow conditioning their march,
 And slow and sure comes up the golden year.
 " When wealth no more shall rest in mounded heaps,
 But smit with frëer light shall slowly melt
 In many streams to fatten lower lands,
 And light shall spread, and man be liker man
 Thro' all the season of the golden year.
 " Shall eagles not be eagles ? wrens be wrens ?
 If all the world were falcons, what of that ?
 The wonder of the eagle were the less,
 But he not less the eagle. Happy days
 Roll onward, leading up the golden year.
 " Fly happy happy sails and bear the Press ;
 Fly happy with the mission of the Cross ;
 Knit land to land, and blowing havenward
 With silks, and fruits, and spices, clear of toll,
 Enrich the markets of the golden year.
 " But we grow old. Ah ! when shall all men's good
 Be each man's rule, and universal Peace
 Lie like a shaft of light across the land,
 And like a lane of beams athwart the sea,
 Thro' all the circle of the golden year ? "
 Thus far he flow'd, and ended ; whereupon
 " Ah, folly ! " in mimic cadence answer'd James—
 " Ah, folly ! for it lies so far away,
 Not in our time, nor in our children's time,
 'Tis like the second world to us that live ;
 'Twere all as one to fix our hopes on Heaven
 As on this vision of the golden year."
 With that he struck his staff against the rocks
 And broke it,—James,—you know him,—old, but full
 Of force and choler, and firm upon his feet,
 And like an oaken stock in winter woods,
 O'erflourish'd with the hoary clematis :
 Then added, all in heat :

— "What stuff is this!
Old writers push'd the happy season
back,—
The more fools they,—we forward :
dreamers both :
You most, that in an age, when every
hour
Must sweat her sixty minutes to the
death,
Live on, God love us, as if the seeds-
man, rapt
Upon the teeming harvest, should not
dip
His hand into the bag : but well I
know
That unto him who works, and feels
he works,
This same grand year is ever at the
doors."
Hespoke : and, high above, I heard
them blast
The steep slate-quarry, and the great
echo flap
And buffet round the hills from bluff
to bluff.

ULYSSES

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these
barren crags,
Match'd with an aged wife, I mete
and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and
know not me.
I cannot rest from travel : I will drink
Life to the lees : all times I have
enjoy'd
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both
with those
That loved me, and alone ; on shore,
and when
Thro' scudding drifts the rainy
Hyades
Vext the dim sea : I am become a
name ;
For always roaming with a hungry
heart
Much have I seen and known ; cities
of men
And manners, climates, councils,
governments,

Myself not least, but honour'd of
them all ;
And drunk delight of battle with my
peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy
Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met ;
Yet all experience is an arch where-
thro'
Gleams that untravell'd world, whose
margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an
end,
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in
use !
As tho' to breathe were life. Life
piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains : but every hour is
saved
From that eternal silence, something
more,
A bringer of new things ; and vile it
were
For some three suns to store and
hoard myself,
And this gray spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge, like a sinking
star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human
thought.
This is my son, mine own Telema-
chus,
To whom I leave the sceptre and the
isle—
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
This labour, by slow prudence to
make mild
A rugged people, and thro' soft
degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the
good.
Most blameless is he, centred in the
sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household
gods,
When I am gone. He works his
work, I mine.
There lies the port : the vessel puffs
her sail :
There gloom the dark broad seas.
My mariners,

Souls that have toil'd, and wrought,
 and thought with me—
 That ever with a frolic welcome took
 The thunder and the sunshine, and
 opposed
 Free hearts, free foreheads—you and
 I are old ;
 Old age hath yet his honour and his
 toil ;
 Death closes all : but something ere
 the end,
 Some work of noble note, may yet be
 done,
 Not unbecoming men that strove with
 Gods.
 The lights begin to twinkle from the
 rocks :
 The long day wanes : the slow moon
 climbs : the deep
 Moans round with many voices. Come,
 my friends,
 'Tis not too late to seek a newer
 world.
 Push off, and sitting well in order
 smite
 The sounding furrows ; for my purpose
 holds
 To sail beyond the sunset, and the
 baths
 Of all the western stars, until I die.
 It may be that the gulfs will wash us
 down :
 It may be we shall touch the Happy
 Isles,
 And see the great Achilles, whom we
 knew.
 Tho' much is taken, much abides ;
 and tho'
 We are not now that strength which
 in old days
 Moved earth and heaven ; that which
 we are, we are ;
 One equal temper of heroic hearts,
 Made weak by time and fate, but
 strong in will
 To strive, to seek, to find, and not to
 yield. ✓

'Tis the place, and all around it, as of
 old, the curlews call,
 Dreary gleams about the moorland
 flying over Locksley Hall ;
 Locksley Hall, that in the distance
 overlooks the sandy tracts,
 And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring
 into cataracts.
 Many a night from yonder ivied case-
 ment, ere I went to rest,
 Did I look on great Orion sloping
 slowly to the West.
 Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising
 thro' the mellow shade,
 Glitter like a swarm of fire-flies
 tangled in a silver braid.
 Here about the beach I wander'd,
 nourishing a youth sublime
 With the fairy tales of science, and
 the long result of Time ;
 When the centuries behind me like a
 fruitful land reposed ;
 When I clung to all the present for
 the promise that it closed :
 When I dipt into the future far as
 human eye could see ;
 Saw the Vision of the world, and all
 the wonder that would be.—
 In the Spring a fuller crimson comes
 upon the robin's breast ;
 In the Spring the wanton lapwing
 gets himself another crest ;
 In the Spring a livelier iris changes on
 the burnish'd dove ;
 In the Spring a young man's fancy
 lightly turns to thoughts of love.
 Then her cheek was pale and thinner
 than should be for one so young,
 And her eyes on all my motions with
 a mute observance hung.

LOCKSLEY HALL

COMRADES, leave me here a little,
 while as yet 'tis early morn :
 Leave me here, and when you want
 me, sound upon the bugle horn.

And I said, " My cousin Amy, speak,
 and speak the truth to me,
 Trust me, cousin, all the current of
 my being sets to thee."

On her pallid cheek and forehead
 came a colour and a light,
 As I have seen the rosy red flushing in
 the northern night.

And she turn'd—her bosom shaken
 with a sudden storm of sighs—
 All the spirit deeply dawning in the
 dark of hazel eyes—

Saying, "I have hid my feelings,
 fearing they should do me
 wrong;"

Saying, "Dost thou love me, cousin?"
 weeping, "I have loved thee
 long."

Love took up the glass of Time, and
 turn'd it in his glowing hands;
 Every moment, lightly shaken, ran
 itself in golden sands.

Love took up the harp of Life, and
 smote on all the chords with
 might;

Smote the chord of Self, that, tremb-
 ling, pass'd in music out of sight.

Many a morning on the moorland did
 we hear the copses ring,
 And her whisper throng'd my pulses
 with the fullness of the Spring.

Many an evening by the waters did
 we watch the stately ships,
 And our spirits rush'd together at the
 touching of the lips.

O my cousin, shallow-hearted! O
 my Amy, mine no more!
 O the dreary, dreary moorland! O
 the barren, barren shore!

Falser than all fancy fathoms, falser
 than all songs have sung,
 Puppet to a father's threat, and ser-
 vile to a shrewish tongue!

Is it well to wish thee happy?—hav-
 ing known me—to decline
 On a range of lower feelings and a
 narrower heart than mine!

Yet it shall be: thou shalt lower to
 his level day by day,
 What is fine within thee growing
 coarse to sympathise with clay.

As the husband is, the wife is: thou
 art mated with a clown,
 And the grossness of his nature will
 have weight to drag thee down.

He will hold thee, when his passion
 shall have spent its novel force,
 Something better than his dog, a
 little dearer than his horse.

What is this? his eyes are heavy:
 think not they are glazed with
 wine.

Go to him: it is thy duty: kiss him:
 take his hand in thine.

It may be my lord is weary, that his
 brain is over-wrought:
 Soothe him with thy finer fancies,
 touch him with thy lighter
 thought.

He will answer to the purpose, easy
 things to understand—
 Better thou wert dead before me, tho'
 I slew thee with my hand!

Better thou and I were lying, hidden
 from the heart's disgrace,
 Roll'd in one another's arms, and
 silent in a last embrace.

Cursed be the social wants that sin
 against the strength of youth!
 Cursed be the social lies that warp us
 from the living truth!

Cursed be the sickly forms that err
 from honest Nature's rule!
 Cursed be the gold that gilds the
 straiten'd forehead of the fool!

Well—'tis well that I should bluster!
 —Hadst thou less unworthy
 proved—

Would to God—for I had loved thee
 more than ever wife was loved.

Am I mad, that I should cherish that
 which bears but bitter fruit?

- I will pluck it from my bosom, tho'
my heart be at the root.
- Never, tho' my mortal summers to
such length of years should
come
As the many-winter'd crow that leads
the clanging rookery home.
- Where is comfort ? in division of the
records of the mind ?
Can I part her from herself, and
love her, as I knew her, kind ?
- I remember one that perish'd : sweetly
did she speak and move :
Such a one do I remember, whom to
look at was to love.
- Can I think of her as dead, and love
her for the love she bore ?
No—she never loved me truly : love is
love for evermore.
- Comfort ? comfort scorn'd of devils !
this is truth the poet sings,
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is
remembering happier things.
- Drug thy memories, lest thou learn it,
lest thy heart be put to proof,
In the dead unhappy night, and when
the rain is on the roof.
- Like a dog, he hunts in dreams, and
thou art staring at the wall,
Where the dying night-lamp flickers,
and the shadows rise and fall.
- Then a hand shall pass before thee,
pointing to his drunken sleep,
To thy widow'd marriage-pillows, to
the tears that thou wilt weep.
- Thou shalt hear the " Never, never,"
whisper'd by the phantom years,
And a song from out the distance in
the ringing of thine ears ;
- And an eye shall vex thee, looking
ancient kindness on thy pain.
Turn thee, turn thee on thy pillow :
get thee to thy rest again.
- Nay, but Nature brings thee solace ;
for a tender voice will cry.
'Tis a purer life than thine ; a lip to
drain thy trouble dry.
- Baby lips will laugh me down : my
latest rival brings thee rest.
Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me
from the mother's breast.
- O, the child too clothes the father
with a dearness not his due.
Half is thine and half is his : it will
be worthy of the two.
- O, I see thee old and formal, fitted
to thy petty part,
With a little hoard of maxims preach-
ing down a daughter's heart.
- " They were dangerous guides the
feelings—she herself was not
exempt—
Truly, she herself had suffer'd"—
Perish in thy self-contempt !
- Overlive it—lower yet—be happy !
wherefore should I care ?
I myself must mix with action, lest I
wither by despair.
- What is that which I should turn to,
lighting upon days like these ?
Every door is barr'd with gold, and
opens but to golden keys.
- Every gate is throng'd with suitors,
all the markets overflow.
I have but an angry fancy : what is
that which I should do ?
- I had been content to perish, falling
on the foeman's ground,
When the ranks are roll'd in vapour,
and the winds are laid with
sound.
- But the jingling of the guinea helps
the hurt that Honour feels,
And the nations do but murmur,
snarling at each other's heels.
- Can I but relive in sadness ? I will
turn that earlier page.

LOCKSLEY HALL

Hide me from my deep emotion, O thou wondrous Mother-Age !	There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe, And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal law.
Make me feel the wild pulsation that I felt before the strife, When I heard my days before me, and the tumult of my life;	So I triumph'd, ere my passion sweep- ing thro' me left me dry, Left me with the palsied heart, and left me with the jaundiced eye ;
Yearning for the large excitement that the coming years would yield, Eager-hearted as a boy when first he leaves his father's field,	Eye, to which all order festers, all things here are out of joint, Science moves, but slowly slowly, creeping on from point to point :
And at night along the dusky high- way near and nearer drawn, Sees in heaven the light of London flaring like a dreary dawn ;	Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion, creeping nigher, Glares at one that nods and winks behind a slowly-dying fire.
And his spirit leaps within him to be gone before him then, Underneath the light he looks at, in among the throngs of men ;	Yet I doubt not thro' the ages one. increasing purpose runs, And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the process of the suns.
Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping something new ; That which they have done but earnest of the things that they shall do :	What is that to him that reaps not harvest of his youthful joys, Tho' the deep heart of existence beat for ever like a boy's ?
For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see, Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be ;	Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and I linger on the shore, And the individual withers, and the world is more and more.
Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails, Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales ;	Knowledge comes, but wisdom lin- gers, and he bears a laden breast, Full of sad experience, moving toward the stillness of his rest.
Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rain'd a ghastly dew From the nations' airy navies grap- pling in the central blue ;	Hark, my merry comrades call me, sounding on the bugle-horn, They to whom my foolish passion were a target for their scorn :
Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-wind rushing warm, With the standards of the peoples plunging thro' the thunder- storm ;	Shall it not be scorn to me to harp on such a moulder'd string ? I am shamed thro' all my nature to have loved so slight a thing.
Till the war-drum throbb'd no longer, and the battle-flags were furl'd In the Parliament of man, the Feder- ation of the world.	Weakness to be wroth with weakness ! woman's pleasure, woman's pain— Nature made them blinder motions bounded in a shallower brain :

Woman is the lesser man, and all thy
 passions, match'd with mine,
 Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and
 as water unto wine—

Here at least, where nature sickens,
 nothing. Ah, for some retreat
 Deep in yonder shining Orient, where
 my life began to beat;

Where in wild Mahratta-battle fell
 my father evil-starr'd;—
 I was left a trampled orphan, and a
 selfish uncle's ward.

Or to burst all links of habit—there
 to wander far away,
 On from island unto island at the
 gateways of the day.

Larger constellations burning, mellow
 moons and happy skies,
 Breadths of tropic shade and palms in
 cluster, knots of Paradise.

Never comes the trader, never floats
 an European flag,
 Slides the bird o'er lustrous wood-
 land, swings the trailer from the
 crag;

Droops the heavy-blossom'd bower,
 hangs the heavy-fruited tree—
 Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-
 purple spheres of sea.

There methinks would be enjoyment
 more than in this march of mind,
 In the steamship, in the railway, in
 the thoughts that shake man-
 kind.

There the passions cramp'd no longer
 shall have scope and breathing-
 space;

I will rake some savage woman, she
 shall rear my dusky race.

Iron-jointed, supple-sinew'd, they
 shall dive, and they shall run,
 Catch the wild goat by the hair, and
 hurl their lances in the sun;

Whistle back the parrot's call, and
 leap the rainbows of the brooks,
 Not with blinded eyesight poring
 over miserable books—

Fool, again the dream, the fancy!
 but I *know* my words are wild,
 But I count the gray barbarian lower
 than the Christian child.

I, to herd with narrow foreheads,
 vacant of our glorious gains,
 Like a beast with lower pleasures,
 like a beast with lower pains!

Mated with a squalid savage—what
 to me were sun or clime?
 I the heir of all the ages, in the fore-
 most files of time—

I that rather held it better men should
 perish one by one,
 Than that earth should stand at gaze
 like Joshua's moon in Ajalon!

Not in vain the distance beacons.
 Forward, forward let us range.
 Let the great world spin for ever down
 the ringing grooves of change.

Thro' the shadow of the globe we
 sweep into the younger day:
 Better fifty years of Europe than a
 cycle of Cathay.

Mother-Age (for mine I knew not)
 help me as when life begun:
 Rift the hills, and roll the waters,
 flash the lightnings, weigh the
 Sun—

O, I see the crescent promise of my
 spirit hath not set.
 Ancient founts of inspiration well
 thro' all my fancy yet.

Howsoever these things be, a long
 farewell to Locksley Hall!
 Now for me the woods may wither,
 now for me the roof-tree fall.

Comes a vapour from the margin,
 blackening over heath andholt,
 Cramming all the blast before it, in
 its breast a thunderbolt.

Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with rain
or hail, or fire or snow;
For the mighty wind arises, roaring
seaward, and I go.

GODIVA

*I wailed for the train at Coventry ;
I hung with grooms and porters on the
bridge,
To watch the three tall spires ; and
there I shaped*

The city's ancient legend into this :—

Not only we, the latest seed of
Time,
New men, that in the flying of a
wheel
Cry down the past, not only we, that
prate
Of rights and wrongs, have loved the
people well,
And loathed to see them overtax'd ;
but she
Did more, and underwent, and over-
came,
The woman of a thousand summers
back,
Godiva, wife to that grim Earl, who
ruled
In Coventry : for when he laid a tax
Upon his town, and all the mothers
brought
Their children, clamouring. " If we
pay, we starve ! "
She sought her lord, and found him,
where he strode
About the hall, among his dogs,
alone,
His beard a foot before him, and his
hair
A yard behind. She told him of their
tears,
And pray'd him, " If they pay this
tax, they starve."
Whereat he stared, replying, half-
amazed,
" You would not let your little finger
ache
For such as *these* ? "—" But I would
die," said she.
He laugh'd, and swore by Peter and
by Paul :

Then fillip'd at the diamond in her
ear ;

" O ay, ay, ay, you talk ! "—" Alas ! "
she said,

" But prove me what it is I would not
do."

And from a heart as rough as Esau's
hand,

He answer'd, " Ride you naked thro'
the town,

And I repeal it ; " and nodding, as in
scorn,

He parted, with great strides among
his dogs.

So left alone, the passions of her
mind,

As winds from all the compass shift
and blow,

Made war upon each other for an
hour,

Till pity won. She sent a herald
forth,

And bad him cry, with sound of
trumpet, all

The hard condition ; but that she
would loose

The people : therefore, as they loved
her well,

From then till noon no foot should
pace the street,

No eye look down, she passing ; but
that all

Should keep within, door shut, and
window barr'd.

Then fled she to her inmost bower,
and there

Unclasp'd the wedded eagles of her
belt,

The grim Earl's gift ; but ever at a
breath

She linger'd, looking like a summer
moon

Half-dipt in cloud : anon she shook
her head,

And shower'd the rippled ringlets to
her knee ;

Unclad herself in haste ; adown the
stair

Stole on ; and, like a creeping sun-
beam, slid

From pillar unto pillar, until she
reach'd

The gateway ; there she found her
palfrey trap

In purple blazon'd with armorial
gold.

Then she rode forth, clothed on
with chastity :

The deep air listen'd round her as she
rode,

And all the low wind hardly breathed
for fear.

The little wide-mouth'd heads upon
the spout

Had cunning eyes to see : the bark-
ing cur

Made her cheek flame : her palfrey'
footfall shot

Light horrors thro' her pulses : the
blind walls

Were full of chinks and holes ; and
overhead

Fantastic gables, crowding, stared :
but she

Not less thro' all bore up, till, last, she
saw

The white-flower'd elder-thicket from
the field

Gleam thro' the Gothic archways in
the wall.

Then she rode back, clothed on
with chastity :

And one low churl, compact of thank-
less earth,

The fatal byword of all years to
come,

Boring a little auger-hole in fear,
Peep'd—but his eyes, before they
had their will,

Were shrivel'd into darkness in his
head,

And dropt before him. So the
Powers, who wait

On noble deeds, cancell'd a sense mis-
used ;

And she, that knew not, pass'd : and
all at once,

With twelve great shocks of sound,
the shameless noon

Was clash'd and hammer'd from a
hundred towers,

One after one : but even then she
gain'd

Her bower ; whence reissuing, robed
and crown'd,

To meet her lord, she took the tax
away,

And built herself an everlasting name.

THE TWO VOICES

A STILL small voice spake unto me,
" Thou art so full of misery,
Were it not better not to be ? "

Then to the still small voice I said ;
" Let me not cast in endless shade
What is so wonderfully made."

To which the voice did urge reply ;
" To-day I saw the dragon-fly
Come from the wells where he did lie.

" An inner impulse rent the veil
Of his old husk : from head to tail
Came out clear plates of sapphire
mail.

" He dried his wings : like gauze they
grew
Thro' crofts and pastures wet with dew
A living flash of light he flew."

I said, " When first the world began,
Young Nature thro' five cycles ran,
And in the sixth she moulded man.

" She gave him mind, the lordliest
Proportion, and, above the rest,
Dominion in the head and breast."

Thereto the silent voice replied ;
" Self-blinded are you by your pride:
Look up thro' night : the world is
wide.

" This truth within thy mind rehearse,
That in a boundless universe
Is boundless better, boundless worse.

" Think you this mould of hopes and
fears
Could find no statelier than his peers
In yonder hundred million spheres ? "

It spake, moreover, in my mind :
" Tho' thou worts scatter'd to the wind,
Yet is there plenty of the kind."

Then did my response clearer fall :
" No compound of this earthly ball
Is like another, all in all."

To which he answer'd scoffingly ;
 " Good soul ! suppose I grant it thee,
 Who'll weep for thy deficiency ?

" Or will one beam be less intense,
 When thy peculiar difference
 Is cancell'd in the world of sense ? "

I would have said, " Thou canst not
 know,"

But my full heart, that work'd be-
 low,

Rain'd thro' my sight its overflow.

Again the voice spake unto me :
 " Thou art so steep'd in misery,
 Surely 'twere better not to be.

" Thine anguish will not let thee sleep,
 Nor any train of reason keep :
 Thou canst not think, but thou wilt
 weep."

I said, " The years with change
 advance :

If I make dark my countenance,
 I shut my life from happier chance.

" Some turn this sickness yet might
 take,

Ev'n yet." But he : " What drug
 can make

A wither'd palsy cease to shake ? "

I wept, " Tho' I should die, I know
 That all about the thorn will blow
 In tufts of rosy-tinted snow ;

" And men, thro' novel spheres of
 thought

Still moving after truth long sought,
 Will learn new things when I am
 not."

" Yet," said the secret voice, " some
 time,

Sooner or later, will gray prime
 Make thy grass hoar with early rime

" Not less swift souls that yearn for
 light,

Rapt after heaven's starry flight,
 Would sweep the tracts of day and
 night.

" Not less the bee would range her
 cells,
 The furzy prickle fire the dells,
 The foxglove cluster dappled bells."

I said that " all the years invent ;
 Each month is various to present
 The world with some development.

" Were this not well, to bide mine
 hour,

Tho' watching from a ruin'd tower
 How grows the day of human power?"

" The highest-mounted mind," he
 said,

" Still sees the sacred morning spread
 The silent summit overhead.

" Will thirty seasons render plain
 Those lonely lights that still remain,
 Just breaking over land and main ?

" Or make that morn, from his cold
 crown

And crystal silence creeping down,
 Flood with full daylight glebe and
 town ?

" Forerun thy peers, thy time, and let
 Thy feet, millenniums hence, be set
 In midst of knowledge, dream'd not
 yet.

" Thou hast not gain'd a real height,
 Nor art thou nearer to the light,
 Because the scale is infinite.

" 'Twere better not to breathe or
 speak,

Than cry for strength, remaining
 weak,

And seem to find, but still to seek.

" Moreover, but to seem to find
 Asks what thou lackest, thought
 resign'd,

A healthy frame, a quiet mind."

I said, " When I am gone away,
 ' He dared not tarry,' men will say,
 Doing dishonour to my clay."

"This is more vile," he made reply
 "To breathe and loathe, to live and
 sigh,
 Than once from dread of pain to die

"Sick art thou—a divided will
 Still heaping on the fear of ill
 The fear of men, a coward still.

"Do men love thee? Art thou so
 bound
 To men, that how thy name may
 sound
 Will vex thee lying underground?

"The memory of the wither'd leaf
 In endless time is scarce more brief
 Than of the garner'd Autumn-sheaf.

"Go, vexed Spirit, sleep in trust;
 The right ear, that is fill'd with dust,
 Hears little of the false or just."

"Hard task, to pluck resolve," I
 cried,
 "From emptiness and the waste wide
 Of that abyss, or scornful pride!

"Nay—rather yet that I could raise
 One hope that warm'd me in the days
 While still I yearn'd for human praise.

"When, wide in soul and bold of
 tongue,
 Among the tents I paused and sung,
 The distant battle flash'd and rung.

"I sung the joyful Pæan clear,
 And, sitting, burnish'd without fear
 The brand, the buckler, and the
 spear—

"Waiting to strive a happy strife,
 To war with falsehood to the knife,
 And not to lose the good of life—

"Some hidden principle to move,
 To put together, part and prove,
 And mete the bounds of hate and
 love—

"As far as might be, to carve out
 Free space for every human doubt,
 That the whole mind might orb
 about—

"To search thro' all I felt or saw,
 The springs of life, the depths of awe,
 And reach the law within the law:

"At least, not rotting like a weed,
 But, having sown some generous
 seed,
 Fruitful of further thought and deed,

"To pass, when Life her light with-
 draws,
 Not void of righteous self-applause,
 Nor in a merely selfish cause—

"In some good cause, not in mine
 own,
 To perish, wept for, honour'd, known,
 And like a warrior overthrown;

"Whose eyes are dim with glorious
 tears,
 When, soil'd with noble dust, he hears
 His country's war-song thrill his ears:

"Then dying of a mortal stroke,
 What time the foeman's line is broke,
 And all the war is roll'd in smoke."

"Yea!" said the voice, "thy dream
 was good,
 While thou abodest in the bud.
 It was the stirring of the blood.

"If Nature put not forth her power
 About the opening of the flower,
 Who is it that could live an hour?

"Then comes the check, the change,
 the fall.
 Pain rises up, old pleasures pall.
 There is one remedy for all.

Yet hadst thou, thro' enduring pain,
 Ink'd month to month with such a
 chain
 Of knitted purport, all were vain.

"Thou hadst not between death and
 birth
 Dissolved the riddle of the earth.
 So were thy labour little-worth.

"That men with knowledge merely cannot hide that some have
play'd, striven,
I told thee—hardly nigher made, Achieving calm, to whom was given
Tho' scaling slow from grade to grade; The joy that mixes man with Heaven :

"Much less this dreamer, deaf and "Who, rowing hard against the
blind, stream,
Named man, may hope some truth to Saw distant gates of Eden gleam,
find, And did not dream it was a dream ;
That bears relation to the mind.

"For every worm beneath the moon "But heard, by secret transport led,
Draws different threads, and late and Ev'n in the charnels of the dead,
soon The murmur of the fountain-head—
Spins, toiling out his own cocoon.

"Cry, faint not : either Truth is born "Which did accomplish their desire,
Beyond the polar gleam forlorn, Bore and forbore, and did not tire,
Or in the gateways of the morn. Like Stephen, an unquenched fire.

"Cry, faint not, climb : the summits "He heeded not reviling tones,
slope Nor sold his heart to idle moans,
Beyond the furthest flights of hope, Tho' cursed and scorned, and bruised
Wrapt in dense cloud from base to with stones :
cope.

"Sometimes a little corner shines, "But looking upward, full of grace,
As over rainy mist inclines He pray'd, and from a happy place
A gleaming gray with belts of pines. God's glory smote him on the face."

"I will go forward, sayest thou, The sullen answer slid betwixt :
I shall not fail to find her now. "Not that the grounds of hope were
Look up, the fold is on her brow. fix'd,
The elements were kindlier mix'd."

"If straight thy track, or if oblique, I said, "I toil beneath the curse,
Thou know'st not. Shadows thou But, knowing not the universe,
dost strike, I fear to slide from bad to worse.
Embracing cloud, Ixion-like ;

"And owning but a little more "And that, in seeking to undo
Than beasts, abidest lame and poor, One riddle, and to find the true,
Calling thyself a little lower I knit a hundred others new :

"Than angels. Cease to wail and "Or that this anguish fleeting hence,
brawl ! Unmanacled from bonds of sense,
Why inch by inch to darkness crawl ? Be fix'd and froz'n to permanence :
There is one remedy for all."

"O dull, one-sided voice," said I, "For I go, weak from suffering here ;
"Wilt thou make everything a lie, Naked I go, and void of cheer :
To flatter me that I may die ? What is it that I may not fear ?"

"I know that age to age succeeds, "Consider well," the voice replied,
Blowing a noise of tongues and deeds, "His face, that two hours since hath
A dust of systems and of creeds. died ;
Wilt thou find passion, pain or
pride ?

- "Will he obey when one commands?
Or answer should one press his hands?
He answers not, nor understands.
- "His palms are folded on his breast:
There is no other thing express'd
But long disquiet merged in rest.
- "His lips are very mild and meek:
Tho' one should smite him on the
cheek,
And on the mouth, he will not speak.
- "His little daughter, whose sweet
face
He kiss'd, taking his last embrace,
Becomes dishonour to her race—
- "His sons grow up that bear his
name,
Some grow to honour, some to
shame,—
But he is chill to praise or blame.
- "He will not hear the north-wind
rave,
Nor, moaning, household shelter
crave
From winter rains that beat his grave.
- "High up the vapours fold and swim:
About him broods the twilight dim:
The place he knew forgetteth him."
- "If all be dark, vague voice," I said,
"These things are wrapt in doubt and
dread,
Nor canst thou show the dead are
dead.
- "Thesap dries up: the plant declines.
A deeper tale my heart divines.
Know I not Death? the outward
signs?
- "I found him when my years were
few;
A shadow on the graves I knew,
And darkness in the village yew.
- "From grave to grave the shadow
crept:
In her still place the morning wept:
Touch'd by his feet the daisy slept.
- "The simple senses crowd'd his head:
'Omega! thou art Lord,' they said,
'We find no motion in the dead.'
- "Why, if man rot in dreamless ease,
Should that plain fact, as taught by
these,
Not make him sure that he shall
cease?
- "Who forged that other influence,
That heat of inward evidence,
By which he doubts against the
sense?
- "He owns the fatal gift of eyes,
That read his spirit blindly wise,
Not simple as a thing that dies.
- "Here sits he shaping wings to fly:
His heart forebodes a mystery:
He names the name Eternity.
- "That type of Perfect in his mind
In Nature can he nowhere find.
He sows himself on every wind.
- "He seems to hear a Heavenly Friend,
And thro' thick veils to apprehend
A labour working to an end.
- "The end and the beginning vex
His reason: many things perplex,
With motions, checks, and counter-
checks.
- "He knows a baseness in his blood
At such strange war with something
good,
He may not do the thing he would.
- "Heaven opens inward, chasms yawn,
Vast images in glimmering dawn,
Half shown, are broken and with-
drawn.
- "Ah! sure within him and without,
Could his dark wisdom find it out,
There must be answer to his doubt.
- "But thou canst answer not again.
With thine own weapon art thou
slain,
Or thou wilt answer but in vain.

"The doubt would rest, I dare not
solve.
In the same circle we revolve.
Assurance only breeds resolve."

As when a billow, blown against,
Falls back, the voice with which I
fenced
A little ceased, but recommenced.

"Where wert thou when thy father
play'd
In his free field, and pastime made,
A merry boy in sun and shade?"

"A merry boy they called him then.
He sat upon the knees of men
In days that never come again.

"Before the little ducts began
To feed thy bones with lime, and ran
Their course, till thou wert also man:

"Who took a wife, who rear'd his
race,
Whose wrinkles gather'd on his face,
Whose troubles number with his
days:

"A life of nothings, nothing-worth,
From that first nothing ere his birth
To that last nothing under earth!"

"These words," I said, "are like the
rest,
No certain clearness, but at best
A vague suspicion of the breast:

"But if I grant, thou might'st defend
The thesis which thy words intend—
That to begin implies to end;

"Yet how should I for certain hold,
Because my memory is so cold,
That I first was in human mould?"

"I cannot make this matter plain,
But I would shoot, how'er in vain,
A random arrow from the brain.

"It may be that no life is found,
Which only to one engine bound
Falls off, but cycles always round.

"As old mythologies relate,
Some draught of Lethe might await
The slipping thro' from state to state.

"As here we find in trances, men
Forget the dream that happens then,
Until they fall in trance again.

"So might we, if our state were such
As one before, remember much,
For those two likes might meet and
touch.

"But, if I lapsed from nobler place,
Some legend of a fallen race
Alone might hint of my disgrace;

"Some vague emotion of delight
In gazing up an Alpine height,
Some yearning toward the lamps of
night.

"Or if thro' lower lives I came—
Tho' all experience past became
Consolidate in mind and frame—

"I might forget my weaker lot;
For is not our first year forgot?
The haunts of memory echo not.

"And men, whose reason long was
blind,
From cells of madness unconfined,
Oft lose whole years of darker mind.

"Much more, if first I floated free,
As naked essence, must I be
Incompetent of memory:

"For memory dealing but with time,
And he with matter, could she climb
Beyond her own material prime?"

"Moreover, something is or seems,
That touches me with mystic gleams,
Like glimpses of forgotten dreams—

"Of something felt, like something
here;
Of something done, I know not
where;
Such as no language may declare."

- The still voice laugh'd. "I talk,"
said he,
"Not with thy dreams. Suffice it
thee
Thy pain is a reality."
- "But thou," said I, "hast miss'd
thy mark,
Who sought'st to wreck my mortal
ark,
By making all the horizon dark.
- "Why not set forth, if I should do
This rashness, that which might
ensue
With this old soul in organs new?
- "Whatever crazy sorrow saith,
No life that breathes with human
breath
Has ever truly long'd for death.
- "'Tis life, whereof our nerves are
scant,
Oh life, not death, for which we pant :
More life, and fuller, that I want."
- I ceased, and sat as one forlorn.
Then said the voice, in quiet scorn,
"Behold, it is the Sabbath morn."
- And I arose, and I released
The casement, and the light increased
With freshness in the dawning east.
- Like soften'd airs that blowing steal,
When meres begin to uncongeal,
The sweet church bells began to peal.
- On to God's house the people prest :
Passing the place where each must
rest,
Each enter'd like a welcome guest.
- One walk'd between his wife and child,
With measur'd footfall firm and mild,
And now and then he gravely smiled.
- The prudent partner of his blood
Lean'd on him, faithful, gentle, good,
Wearing the rose of womanhood.
- And in their double love secure,
The little maiden walk'd demure,
Pacing with downward eyelids pure.
- These three made unity so sweet,
My frozen heart began to beat,
Remembering its ancient heat.
- I blest them, and they wander'd on :
I spoke, but answer came there none :
The dull and bitter voice was gone.
- A second voice was at mine ear,
A little whisper silver-clear,
A murmur, "Be of better cheer."
- As from some blissful neighbourhood,
A notice faintly understood,
"I see the end, and know the good."
- A little hint to solace woe,
A hint, a whisper breathing low,
I may not speak of what I know."
- Like an Æolian harp that wakes
No certain air, but overtakes
Far thought with music that it makes :
- Such seem'd the whisper at my side :
"What is it thou knowest, sweet
voice?" I cried.
"A hidden hope," the voice replied :
- So heavenly-toned, that in that hour
From out my sullen heart a power
Broke, like the rainbow from the
shower,
- To feel, altho' no tongue can prove,
That every cloud, that spreads above
And veileth love, itself is love.
- And forth into the fields I went,
And Nature's living motion lent
The pulse of hope to discontent.
- I wonder'd at the bounteous hours,
The slow result of winter showers :
You scarce could see the grass for
flowers.
- I wonder'd, while I paced along :
The woods were fill'd so full with
song,
There seem'd no room for sense of
wrong.

So variously seem'd all things wrought,
 I marvell'd how the mind was brought
 To anchor by one gloomy thought;
 Faint shadows, vapours lightly curl'd,
 Faint murmurs from the meadows
 come,
 Like hints and echoes of the world
 To spirits folded in the womb.

And wherefore rather I made choice
 To commune with that barren voice,
 Than him that said, "Rejoice!
 rejoice!"

THE DAY-DREAM

PROLOGUE

O, LADY FLORA, let me speak:
 A pleasant hour has past away
 While, dreaming on your damask
 cheek,

The dewy sister-eyelids lay.
 As by the lattice you reclined,
 I went thro' many wayward moods
 To see you dreaming—and, behind,
 A summer crisp with shining woods.
 And I too dream'd, until at last
 Across my fancy, brooding warm,
 The reflex of a legend past,
 And loosely settled into form.
 And would you have the thought I
 had,

And see the vision that I saw,
 Then take the broidery-frame, and
 add

A crimson to the quaint Macaw,
 and I will tell it. Turn your face,
 Nor look with that too-earnest
 eye—

The rhymes are dazzled from their
 place,
 And order'd words asunder fly.

Soft lustre bathes the range of urns
 On every slanting terrace-lawn.
 The fountain to his place returns
 Deep in the garden lake withdrawn.
 Here droops the banner on the tower,
 On the hall-hearths the festal fires,
 The peacock in his laurel bower,
 The parrot in his gilded wires.

Roof-haunting martins warm their
 eggs:

In these, in those the life is stay'd.
 The mantles from the golden pegs
 Droop sleepily: no sound is made,
 Not even of a gnat that sings.
 More like a picture seemeth all
 Than those old portraits of old kings,
 That watch the sleepers from the
 wall.

Here sits the Butler with a flask
 Between his knees, half-drain'd;
 and there
 The wrinkled steward at his task,
 The maid-of-honour blooming fair:
 The page has caught her hand in his:
 Her lips are sever'd as to speak:
 His own are pouted to a kiss:
 The blush is fix'd upon her cheek.

THE SLEEPING PALACE

I

THE varying year with blade and
 sheaf

Clothes and reclathes the happy
 plains;

Here rests the sap within the leaf,
 Here stays the blood along the
 veins.

Till all the hundred summers pass,
 The beams, that thro' the Oriel
 shine,

Make prisms in every carven glass,
 And beaker brimm'd with noble
 wine.

Each baron at the banquet sleeps,
 Grave faces gather'd in a ring.
 His state the king reposing keeps.
 He must have been a jovial king.

<p>All round a hedge upshoots, and shows At distance like a little wood ; Thorns, ivies, woodbine, misletoes, And grapes with bunches red as blood ; All creeping plants, a wall of green Close-matted, bur and brake and brier, And glimpsing over these, just seen, High up, the topmost palace-spire.</p>	<p>She sleeps : her breathings are not heard In palace chambers far apart. The fragrant tresses are not stirr'd That lie upon her charmed heart. She sleeps : on either hand upswells The gold-fringed pillow lightly prest : She sleeps, nor dreams, but ever dwells A perfect form in perfect rest.</p>
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When will the hundred summers die,
 And thought and time be born again,
 And newer knowledge, drawing nigh,
 Bring truth that sways the soul of men ?
 Here all things in their place remain,
 As all were order'd, ages since.
 Come, Care and Pleasure, Hope and Pain,
 And bring the fated fairy Prince.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

I

YEAR after year unto her feet,
 She lying on her couch alone,
 Across the purpled coverlet,
 The maiden's jet-black hair has grown,
 On either side her tranced form
 Forth streaming from a braid of pearl :
 The slumbrous light is rich and warm,
 And moves not on the rounded curl.

The silk star-broider'd coverlid
 Unto her limbs itself doth mould
 Languidly ever ; and, amid
 Her full black ringlets downward roll'd,
 Glows forth each softly-shadow'd arm
 With bracelets of the diamond bright :
 Her constant beauty doth inform
 Stillness with love, and day with light.

THE ARRIVAL

I

ALL precious things, discover'd late,
 To those that seek them issue forth ;
 For love in sequel works with fate,
 And draws the veil from hidden worth.
 He travels far from other skies—
 His mantle glitters on the rocks—
 A fairy Prince, with joyful eyes,
 And lighter-footed than the fox,

The bodies and the bones of those
 That strove in other days to pass,
 Are wither'd in the thorny close,
 Or scatter'd blanching on the grass.
 He gazes on the silent dead :
 " They perish'd in their daring deeds."
 This proverb flashes thro' his head,
 " The many fail : the one succeeds."

He comes, scarce knowing what he seeks ;
 He breaks the hedge : he enters there :
 The colour flies into his cheeks ;
 He trusts to light on something fair ;
 For all his life the charm did talk
 About his path, and hover near
 With words of promise in his walk,
 And whisper'd voices at his ear.

More close and close his footsteps "Pardy," return'd the king, "but
 wind ; still
 The Magic Music in his heart My joints are something stiff or so.
 Beats quick and quicker, till he find My lord, and shall we pass the bill
 The quiet chamber far apart. I mention'd half an hour ago ? "
 His spirit flutters like a lark, The chancellor, sedate and vain,
 Hestoops—to kiss her—on his knee. In courteous words return'd reply :
 " Love, if thy tresses be so dark, But dallied with his golden chain,
 How dark those hidden eyes must And, smiling, put the question by.
 be ! "

THE REVIVAL

A TOUCH, a kiss ! the charm was snapt.
 There rose a noise of striking clocks,
 And feet that ran, and doors that
 clapt,
 And barking dogs, and crowing
 cocks ;
 A fuller light illumined all,
 A breeze thro' all the garden swept,
 A sudden hubbub shook the hall,
 And sixty feet the fountain leapt.

The hedge broke in, the banner blew,
 The butler drank, the steward
 scrawl'd,
 The fire shot up, the martin flew,
 The parrot scream'd, the peacock
 squall'd,
 The maid and page renew'd their
 strife,
 The palace bang'd, and buzz'd and
 clackt,
 And all the long-pent stream of life
 Dash'd downward in a cataract.

And last with these the king awoke,
 And in his chair himself uprear'd,
 And yawn'd, and rubb'd his face, and
 spoke,
 " By holy rood, a royal beard !
 How say you ? we have slept, my
 lords.
 My beard has grown into my
 lap."
 The barons swore, with many words,
 'Twas but an after-dinner's nap.

THE DEPARTURE

AND on her lover's arm she leant,
 And round her waist she felt it fold,
 And far across the hills they went
 In that new world which is the old :
 Across the hills, and far away
 Beyond their utmost purple rim,
 And deep into the dying day
 The happy princess follow'd him.

" I'd sleep another hundred years,
 O love, for such another kiss ; "
 " O wake for ever, love," she hears,
 " O love, 'twas such as this and
 this."
 And o'er them many a sliding star,
 And many a merry wind was borne,
 And, stream'd thro' many a golden
 bar,
 The twilight melted into morn.

III

" O eyes long laid in happy sleep ! "
 " O happy sleep, that lightly fled ! "
 " O happy kiss, that woke thy sleep ! "
 " O love, thy kiss would wake the
 dead ! "
 And o'er them many a flowing range
 Of vapour buoy'd the crescent-
 bark,
 And, rapt thro' many a rosy change,
 The twilight died into the dark.

IV

"A hundred summers ! can it be ?
 And whither goest thou, tell me
 where ?"
 "O seek my father's court with me,
 For there are greater wonders
 there."
 And o'er the hills, and far away
 Beyond their utmost purple rim,
 Beyond the night, across the day,
 Thro' all the world she follow'd
 him.

MORAL

I

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,
 And if you find no moral there,
 Go, look in any glass and say,
 What moral is in being fair.
 Oh, to what uses shall we put
 The wildweed-flower that simply
 blows ?
 And is there any moral shut
 Within the bosom of the rose ?

But any man that walks the mead,
 In bud or blade, or bloom, may
 find,
 According as his humours lead,
 A meaning suited to his mind.
 And liberal applications lie
 In Art like Nature, dearest friend ;
 So 'twere to cramp its use, if I
 Should hook it to some useful end.

L'ENVOI

You shake your head. A random
 string
 Your finer female sense offends.
 Well—were it not a pleasant thing
 To fall asleep with all one's friends ;
 To pass with all our social ties
 To silence from the paths of men ;
 And every hundred years to rise
 And learn the world, and sleep
 again ;

To sleep thro' terms of mighty wars,
 And wake on science grown to more,
 On secrets of the brain, the stars,
 As wild as aught of fairy lore ;
 And all that else the years will show,
 The Poet-forms of stronger hours,
 The vast Republics that may grow,
 The Federations and the Powers ;
 Titanic forces taking birth
 In divers seasons, divers climes ;
 For we are Ancients of the earth,
 And in the morning of the times.

So sleeping, so aroused from sleep
 Thro' sunny decads new and
 strange,
 Or gay quinqueniads would we reap
 The flower and quintessence of
 change.

Ah, yet would I—and would I might !
 So much your eyes my fancy take—
 Be still the first to leap to light
 That I might kiss those eyes awake !
 For, am I right or am I wrong,
 To choose your own you did not
 care ;
 You'd have *my* moral from the song,
 And I will take my pleasure there :
 And, am I right or am I wrong,
 My fancy, ranging thro' and thro',
 To search a meaning for the song,
 Perforce will still revert to you ;
 Nor finds a closer truth than this
 All-graceful head, so richly curl'd,
 And evermore a costly kiss
 The prelude to some brighter world.

IV

For since the time when Adam first
 Embraced his Eve in happy hour,
 And every bird of Eden burst
 In carol, every bud to flower,
 What eyes, like thine, have waken'd
 hopes ?
 What lips, like thine, so sweetly
 join'd ?
 Where on the double rosebud droops
 The fullness of the pensive mind

Which all too dearly self-involved,
 Yet sleeps a dreamless sleep to me ;
 A sleep by kisses undissolved,
 That lets thee neither hear nor see :
 But break it. In the name of wife,
 And in the rights that name may
 give,
 Are clasp'd the moral of thy life,
 And that for which I care to live.

EPILOGUE

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,
 And, if you find a meaning there,
 O whisper to your glass, and say,
 "What wonder, if he thinks me
 fair ?"
 What wonder I was all unwise,
 To shape the song for your delight
 Like long-tail'd birds of Paradise,
 That float thro' Heaven, and can-
 not light ?
 Or old-world trains, upheld at court
 By Cupid-boys of blooming hue—
 But take it—earnest wed with sport,
 And either sacred unto you.

AMPHION

My father left a park to me,
 But it is wild and barren,
 A garden too with scarce a tree
 And waster than a warren :
 Yet say the neighbours when they call
 It is not bad but good land,
 And in it is the germ of all
 That grows within the woodland.

O had I lived when song was great
 In days of old Amphion,
 And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,
 Nor cared for seed or scion !
 And had I lived when song was great,
 And legs of trees were limber,
 And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,
 And fiddled in the timber !

'Tis said he had a tuneful tongue,
 Such happy intonation,
 Wherever he sat down and sung
 He left a small plantation ;

T.P.W.

Wherever in a lonely grove
 He set up his forlorn pipes,
 The gouty oak began to move,
 And flounder into hornpipes.

The mountain stirr'd its bushy crown,
 And, as tradition teaches,
 Young ashes pirouetted down
 Coquetting with young beeches ;
 And briony-vine and ivy-wreath
 Ran forward to his rhyming,
 And from the valleys underneath
 Came little copses climbing.

The linden broke her ranks and rent
 The woodbine wreaths that bind
 her,
 And down the middle buzz ! she went
 With all her bees behind her :
 The poplars, in long order due,
 With cypress promenaded,
 The shock-head willows two and two
 By rivers galloped.

Came wet-shot alder from the wave,
 Came yews, a dismal coterie ;
 Each pluck'd his one foot from the
 grave,
 Poussetting with a sloe-tree :
 Old elms came breaking from the
 vine,

The vine stream'd out to follow,
 And, sweating rosin, plump'd the pine
 From many a cloudy hollow.

And wasn't it a sight to see,
 When, ere his song was ended,
 Like some great landslip, tree by tree,
 The country-side descended ;
 And shepherds from the mountain-
 eaves

Look'd down, half-pleased, half-
 frighten'd,
 As dash'd about the drunken leaves
 The random sunshine lighten'd !

Oh, nature first was fresh to men,
 And wanton without measure ;
 So youthful and so flexible then,
 You moved her at your pleasure.
 Twang out, my fiddle ! shake the
 twigs !
 And make her dance attendance ;
 Blow, flute, and stir the stiff-set sprigs
 And scirrhous roots and tendons.

'Tis vain ! in such a brassy age
 I could not move a thistle ;
 The very sparrows in the hedge
 Scarce answer to my whistle ;
 Or at the most, when three-parts-sick
 With strumming and with scraping,
 A jackass heehaws from the rick,
 The passive oxen gaping.

But what is that I hear ? a sound
 Like sleepy counsel pleading :
 O Lord !—'tis in my neighbour's
 ground,
 The modern Muses reading.
 They read Botanic Treatises,
 And Works on Gardening thro'
 there,
 And Methods of transplanting trees,
 To look as if they grew there.

The wither'd Misses ! how they prose
 O'er books of travell'd seamen,
 And show you slips of all that grows
 From England to Van Diemen.
 They read in arbours clipt and cut,
 And alleys, faded places,
 By squares of tropic summer shut
 And warm'd in crystal cases.

But these, tho' fed with careful dirt,
 Are neither green nor sappy ;
 Half-conscious of the garden-squirt,
 The spindlings look unhappy.
 Better to me the meanest weed
 That blows upon its mountain,
 The vilest herb that runs to seed
 Beside its native fountain.

And I must work thro' months of toil,
 And years of cultivation,
 Upon my proper patch of soil
 To grow my own plantation.
 I'll take the showers as they fall,
 I will not vex my bosom :
 Enough if at the end of all
 A little garden blossom.

ST. AGNES' EVE

DEEP on the convent-roof the snows
 Are sparkling to the moon :
 My breath to heaven like vapour
 goes :
 May my soul follow soon !

The shadows of the convent-towers
 Slant down the snowy sward,
 Still creeping with the creeping hours
 That lead me to my Lord :
 Make Thou my spirit pure and clear
 As are the frosty skies,
 Or this first snowdrop of the year
 That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soil'd and
 dark,
 To yonder shining ground ;
 As this pale taper's earthly spark,
 To yonder argent round ;
 So shows my soul before the Lamb,
 My spirit before Thee ;
 So in mine earthly house I am,
 To that I hope to be.
 Break up the heavens, O Lord ! and
 far,
 Thro' all yon starlight keen,
 Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,
 In raiment white and clean.

He lifts me to the golden doors ;
 The flashes come and go ;
 All heaven bursts her starry floors,
 And strows her lights below,
 And deepens on and up ! the gates
 Roll back, and far within
 For me the Heavenly Bridegroom
 waits,
 To make me pure of sin.
 The sabbaths of Eternity,
 One sabbath deep and wide—
 A light upon the shining sea—
 The Bridegroom with his bride !

SIR GALAHAD

My good blade carves the casques of
 men,
 My tough lance thrusteth sure,
 My strength is as the strength of ten,
 Because my heart is pure.
 The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,
 The hard brands shiver on the steel,
 The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and
 fly,
 The horse and rider reel :

They reel, they roll in clanging lists,
And when the tide of combat
stands,

Perfume and flowers fall in showers,
That lightly rain from ladies'
hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend
On whom their favours fall!

For them I battle till the end,
To save from shame and thrall :
But all my heart is drawn above,
My knees are bow'd in crypt and
shrine :

I never felt the kiss of love,
Nor maiden's hand in mine,
More bounteous aspects on me beam,
Me mightier transports move and
thrill ;

So keep I fair thro' faith and prayer
A virgin heart in work and will.

When down the stormy crescent goes,
A light before me swims,
Between dark stems the forest glows,
I hear a noise of hymns :

Then by some secret shrine I ride ;
I hear a voice, but none are there ;
The stalls are void, the doors are wide,
The tapers burning fair.

Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,
The silver vessels sparkle clean,
The shrill bell rings, the censers wings,
And solemn chaunts resound be-
tween.

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres
I find a magic bark ;

I leap on board : no helmsman steers :
I float till all is dark.

A gentle sound, an awful light !
Three angels bear the holy Grail :
With folded feet, in stoles of white,
On sleeping wings they sail.

Ah, blessed vision ! blood of God !
My spirit beats her mortal bars,
As down dark tides the glory slides,
And star-like mingles with the
stars,

When on my goodly charger borne
Thro' dreaming towns I go,
The cock crows ere the Christmas
morn,
The streets are dumb with snow.

The tempest crackles on the leads,
And, ringing, spins from brand and
mail ;

But o'er the dark a glory spreads,
And gilds the driving hail.
I leave the plain, I climb the height ;
No branchy thicket shelter yields ;
But blessed forms in whistling storms
Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.

A maiden knight—to me is given
Such hope, I know not fear ;
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven
That often meet me here.

I muse on joy that will not cease,
Pure spaces clothed in living beams,
Pure lilies of eternal peace,
Whose odours haunt my dreams ;
And, stricken by an angel's hand,
This mortal armour that I wear,
This weight and size, this heart and
eyes,
Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest
air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,
And thro' the mountain-walls
A rolling organ-harmony
Swells up, and shakes and falls.
Then move the trees, the copses nod,
Wings flutter, voices hover clear :
" O just and faithful knight of God !
Ride on ! the prize is near."

So pass I hostel, hall, and grange ;
By bridge and ford, by park and
pale,
All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,
Until I find the holy Grail.

EDWARD GRAY

SWEET Emma Moreland of yonder
town

Met me walking on yonder way,
" And have you lost your heart ? "
she said ;

" And are you married yet, Edward
Gray ? "

Sweet Emma Moreland spoke to me :
Bitterly weeping I turn'd away :

" Sweet Emma Moreland, love no
more
Can touch the heart of Edward
Gray.

"Ellen Adair she loved me well,
Against her father's and mother's
will :

To-day I sat for an hour and wept
By Ellen's grave, on the windy hill

"Shys she was, and I thought her cold
Thought her proud, and fled over
the sea ;

Fill'd I was with folly and spite,
When Ellen Adair was dying for
me.

"Cruel, cruel the words I said !
Cruelly came they back to-day :
'You're too slight and fickle,' I said,
'To trouble the heart of Edward
Gray.'

"There I put my face in the grass
Whisper'd 'Listen to my despair :
I repent me of all I did :
Speak a little, Ellen Adair !'

"Then I took a pencil, and wrote
On the mossy stone, as I lay,
'Here lies the body of Ellen Adair ;
And here the heart of Edward
Gray !'

"Love may come, and love may go,
And fly, like a bird, from tree to
tree :

But I will love no more, no more,
Till Ellen Adair come back to me.

"Bitterly wept I over the stone :
Bitterly weeping I turn'd away :
There lies the body of Ellen Adair !
And there the heart of Edward
Gray !"

WILL WATERPROOF'S LYRICAL MONOLOGUE

MADE AT THE COCK

O PLUMP head-waiter at The Cock,
To which I most resort,
How goes the time ? 'Tis five
o'clock.

Go fetch a pint of port :

But let it not be such as that
You set before chance-comers,
But such whose father-grape grew fat
On Lusitanian summers.

No vain libation to the Muse,
But may she still be kind,
And whisper lovely words, and use
Her influence on the mind,
To make me write my random
rhymes,

Ere they be half-forgotten ;
Nor add and alter, many times,
Till all be ripe and rotten.

I pledge her, and she comes and dips
Her laurel in the wine,
And lays it thrice upon my lips,
These favour'd lips of mine ;
Until the charm have power to make
New lifeblood warm the bosom,
And barren commonplaces break
In full and kindly blossom.

I pledge her silent at the board ;
Her gradual fingers steal
And touch upon the master-chord
Of all I felt and feel.
Old wishes, ghosts of broken plans,
And phantom hopes assemble ;
And that child's heart within the
man's
Begins to move and tremble.

Thro' many an hour of summer suns
By many pleasant ways,
Against its fountain upward runs
The current of my days :
I kiss the lips I once have kiss'd ;
The gas-light wavers dimmer ;
And softly, thro' a vinous mist,
My college friendships glimmer.

grow in worth, and wit, and sense,
Unboding critic-pen,
Or that external want of pence,
Which vexes public men,
Who hold their hands to all, and cry
For that which all deny them—
Who sweep the crossings, wet or dry,
And all the world go by them.

Ah yet, tho' all the world forsake
Tho' fortune clip my wings,

I will not cramp my heart, nor take
Half-views of men and things.
Let Whig and Tory stir their blood ;
There must be stormy weather ;
But for some true result of good
All parties work together.

Let there be thistles, there are grapes ;
If old things, there are new ;
Ten thousand broken lights and
shapes,

Yet glimpses of the true.
Let riffs be rife in prose and rhyme,
We lack not rhymes and reasons,
As on this whirligig of Time
We circle with the seasons.

This earth is rich in man and maid ;
With fair horizons bound :
This whole wide earth of light and
shade

Comes out, a perfect round,
High over roaring Temple-bar,
And, set in Heaven's third story,
I look at all things as they are,
But thro' a kind of glory.

Head-waiter, honour'd by the guest
Half-mused, or reeling-ripe,
The pint, you brought me, was the
best

That ever came from pipe.
But tho' the port surpasses praise,
My nerves have dealt with stiffer.
Is there some magic in the place ?
Or do my peptics differ ?

For since I came to live and learn,
No pint of white or red
Had ever half the power to turn
This wheel within my head,
Which bears a season'd brain about,
Unsubject to confusion,
Tho' soak'd and saturate, out and
out,
Thro' every convolution.

For I am of a numerous house,
With many kinsmen gay,
Where long and largely we carouse
As who shall say me nay :
Each month, a birth-day coming on,
We drink defying trouble,
Or sometimes two would meet in one,
And then we drank it double ;

Whether the vintage, yet unkept,
Had relish fiery-new,
Or, elbow-deep in sawdust, slept,
As old as Waterloo ;
Or stow'd (when classic Canning died)
In musty bins and chambers,
Had cast upon its crusty side
The gloom of ten Decembers.

The Muse, the jolly Muse, it is I
She answer'd to my call,
She changes with that mood or this,
Is all-in-all to all :
She lit the spark within my throat
To make my blood run quicker,
Used all her fiery will, and smote
Her life into the liquor.

And hence this halo lives about
The waiter's hands, that reach
To each his perfect pint of stout,
His proper chop to each.
He looks not like the common breed
That with the napkin dally ;
I think he came like Ganymede,
From some delightful valley.

The Cock was of a larger egg
Than modern poultry drop,
Stept forward on a firmer leg,
And cramm'd a plumper crop ;
Upon an ampler dunghill trod,
Crow'd lustier late and early,
Sipt wine from silver, praising God,
And raked in golden barley.

A private life was all his joy,
Till in a court he saw
A something-pottle-bodied boy,
That knuckled at the taw :
He stoop'd and clutch'd him, fair and
good,
Flew over roof and casement :
His brothers of the weather stood
Stock-still for sheer amazement.

But he, by farmstead, thorpe and
spire,
And follow'd with acclaims,
A sign to many a staring shire,
Came crowing over Thames.

Right down by smoky Paul's they bore,
Till, where the street grows straiter,
One fix'd for ever at the door,
And one became head-waiter.

But whither would my fancy go ?
How out of place she makes
The violet of a legend blow
Among the chops and steaks !
'Tis but a steward of the can,
One shade more plump than com-
mon ;
As just and mere a serving-man
As any, born of woman.

I ranged too high : what draws me
down
Into the common day ?
Is it the weight of that half-crown,
Which I shall have to pay ?
For, something duller than at first,
Nor wholly comfortable,
I sit (my empty glass reversed),
And thrumming on the table :

Half fearful that, with self at strife
I take myself to task ;
Lest of the fullness of my life
I leave an empty flask :
For I had hope, by something rare,
To prove myself a poet ;
But, while I plan and plan, my hair
Is gray before I know it.

So fares it since the years began,
Till they be gather'd up ;
The truth, that flies the flowing can,
Will haunt the vacant cup :
And others' follies teach us not,
Not much their wisdom teaches ;
And most, of sterling worth, is what
Our own experience preaches.

Ah, let the rusty theme alone !
We know not what we know.
But for my pleasant hour, 'tis gone,
'Tis gone, and let it go.
'Tis gone : a thousand such have slept
Away from my embraces,
And fall'n into the dusty crypt
Of darken'd forms and faces.

Go, therefore, thou ! thy betters went
Long since, and came no more ;
With peals of genial clamour sent
From many a tavern-door,
With twisted quirks and happy hits,
From misty men of letters ;
The tavern-hours of mighty wits—
Thine elders and thy betters.

Hours, when the Poet's words and
looks
Had yet their native glow :
Nor yet the fear of little books
Had made him talk for show ;
But, all his vast heart sherris-warm'd,
He flash'd his random speeches ;
Ere days, that deal in ana, swarm'd
His literary leeches.

So mix for ever with the past,
Like all good things on earth !
For should I prize thee, couldst thou
last,
At half thy real worth ?
I hold it good, good things should
pass :
With time I will not quarrel :
It is but yonder empty glass
That makes me maudlin-moral.

Head-waiter of the chop-house here,
To which I most resort,
I too must part : I hold thee dear
For this good pint of port.
For this, thou shalt from all things
suck
Marrow of mirth and laughter ;
And, wheresoe'er thou move, good
luck
Shall fling her old shoe after.

But thou wilt never move from hence,
The sphere thy fate allots :
Thy latter days increased with pence
Go down among the pots :
Thou battenest by the greasy gleam
In haunts of hungry sinners,
Old boxes, larded with the steam
Of thirty thousand dinners.

We fret, we fume, would shift our
skins,
Would quarrel with our lot ;

Thy care is, under polish'd tins,
To serve the hot-and-hot;
To come and go, and come again,
Returning like the pewit,
And watch'd by silent gentlemen,
That trifle with the cruet.

Live long, ere from thy topmost head
The thick-set hazel dies;
Long, ere the hateful crow shall tread
The corners of thine eyes:
Live long, nor feel in head or chest
Our changeful equinoxes,
Till mellow Death, like some late
guest,
Shall call thee from the boxes.

But when he calls, and thou shalt
cease
To pace the gritted floor,
And, laying down an unctuous lease
Of life, shalt earn no more;
No carved cross-bones, the types of
Death,
Shall show thee past to Heaven:
But carved cross-pipes, and, under-
neath,
A pint-pot, neatly graven.

TO —,

AFTER READING A LIFE AND LETTERS

"Cursed be he that moves my bones,"
Shakespeare's Epitaph.

You might have won the Poet's name,
If such be worth the winning now,
And gain'd a laurel for your brow
Of sounder leaf than I can claim;

But you have made the wiser choice,
A life that moves to gracious ends
Thro' troops of unrecording friends,
A deedful life, a silent voice:

And you have miss'd the irreverent
doom
Of those that wear the Poet's crown:
Hereafter, neither knave nor clown
Shall hold their orgies at your tomb.

For now the Poet cannot die
Nor leave his music as of old,
But round him ere he scarce be cold
Begins the scandal and the cry:

"Proclaim the faults he would not
show:
Break lock and seal: betray the
trust:
Keep nothing sacred: 'tis but just
The many-headed beast should
know."

Ah shameless! for he did but sing
A song that pleased us from its
worth;
No public life was his on earth,
No blazon'd statesman he, nor king.

He gave the people of his best:
His worst he kept, his best he gave.
My Shakespeare's curse on clown
and knave
Who will not let his ashes rest!

Who make it seem more sweet to be
The little life of bank and brier,
The bird that pipes his lone desire
And dies unheard within his tree,

Than he that warbles long and loud
And drops at Glory's temple-gates,
For whom the carrion vulture waits
To tear his heart before the crowd!

TO E. L., ON HIS TRAVELS IN GREECE

ILLYRIAN woodlands, echoing falls
Of water, sheets of summer glass,
The long divine Peneïan pass,
The vast Akrokaunian walls,

Tomohrit, Athos, all things fair,
With such a pencil, such a pen,
You shadow forth to distant men,
I read and felt that I was there:

And trust me while I turn'd the page,
And track'd you still on classic
ground,
I grew in gladness till I found
My spirits in the golden age.

For me the torrent ever pour'd
And glisten'd—here and there
alone
The broad-limb'd Gods at random
thrown

By fountain-urns ;—and Naiads oar'd

A glimmering shoulder under gloom
Of cavern pillars ; on the swell
The silver lily heaved and fell ;
And many a slope was rich in bloom

From him that on the mountain lea
By dancing rivulets fed his flocks,
To him who sat upon the rocks,
And fluted to the morning sea.

LADY CLARE

It was the time when lilies blow,
And clouds are highest up in air,
Lord Ronald brought a lily-white doe
To give his cousin, Lady Clare.

I trow they did not part in scorn :
Lovers long-betroth'd were they :
They two will wed the morrow morn ;
God's blessing on the day !

" He does not love me for my birth,
Nor for my lands so broad and fair ;
He loves me for my own true worth,
And that is well," said Lady Clare.

In there came old Alice the nurse,
Said, " Who was this that went
from thee ? "

" It was my cousin," said Lady Clare,
" To-morrow he weds with me."

" O God be thank'd ! " said Alice the
nurse,

" That all comes round so just and
fair :

Lord Ronald is heir of all your lands,
And you are not the Lady Clare."

" Are ye out of your mind, my nurse,
my nurse ? "

Said Lady Clare, " that ye speak
so wiid ? "

" As God's above," said Alice the
nurse,

" I speak the truth : you are my
child.

" The old Earl's daughter died at my
breast ;

I speak the truth, as I live by bread !
I buried her like my own sweet child,
And put my child in her stead."

" Falsely, falsely have ye done,
O mother," she said, " if this be
true,
To keep the best man under the sun
So many years from his due."

" Nay now, my child," said Alice the
nurse,

" But keep the secret for your life,
And all you have will be Lord
Ronald's
When you are man and wife."

" If I'm a beggar born," she said,
" I will speak out, for I dare not lie.
Pull off, pull off, the brooch of gold,
And fling the diamond necklace by."

" Nay now, my child," said Alice the
nurse,

" But keep the secret all ye can."
She said " Not so : but I will know
If there be any faith in man."

" Nay now, what faith ? " said Alice
the nurse,

" The man will cleave unto his
right."

" And he shall have it," the lady
replied,

" Tho' I should die to-night."

" Yet give one kiss to your mother
dear !

Alas, my child, I sinn'd for thee."

" O mother, mother, mother," she
said,

" So strange it seems to me.

" Yet here's a kiss for my mother
dear,

My mother dear, if this be so,
And lay your hand upon my head,
And bless me, mother, ere I go."

She clad herself in a russet gown,
 She was no longer Lady Clare :
 She went by dale, and she went by
 down,
 With a single rose in her hair.

The lily-white doe Lord Ronald had
 brought
 Leapt up from where she lay,
 Dropt her head in the maiden's hand,
 And follow'd her all the way.

Down stept Lord Ronald from his
 tower :
 " O Lady Clare, you shame your
 worth !
 Why come you drest like a village
 maid,
 That are the flower of the earth ? "

" If I come drest like a village maid,
 I am but as my fortunes are :
 I am a beggar born," she said,
 " And not the Lady Clare."

" Play me no tricks," said Lord
 Ronald,
 " For I am yours in word and in
 deed.
 Play me no tricks," said Lord Ronald,
 " Your riddle is hard to read."

O and proudly stood she up !
 Her heart within her did not fail :
 She look'd into Lord Ronald's eyes,
 And told him all her nurse's tale.

He laugh'd a laugh of merry scorn :
 He turn'd, and kiss'd her where she
 stood :

" If you are not the heiress born,
 And I," said he, " the next in
 blood—

" If you are not the heiress born,
 And I," said he, " the lawful heir,
 We two will wed to-morrow morn,
 And you shall still be Lady Clare."

THE LORD OF BURLEIGH

In her ear he whispers gaily,
 " If my heart by signs can tell,
 Maiden, I have watch'd thee daily,
 And I think thou lov'st me well."

She replies, in accents fainter,
 " There is none I love like thee."
 He is but a landscape-painter,
 And a village maiden she.
 He to lips, that fondly falter,
 Presses his without reproof :
 Leads her to the village altar,
 And they leave her father's roof.
 " I can make no marriage present ;
 Little can I give my wife.
 Love will make our cottage pleasant,
 And I love thee more than life."
 They by parks and lodges going
 See the lordly castles stand :
 Summer woods, about them blow-
 ing,

Made a murmur in the land.
 From deep thought himself he rouses,
 Says to her that loves him well,
 " Let us see these handsome houses
 Where the wealthy nobles dwell."
 So she goes by him attended,
 Hears him lovingly converse,
 Sees whatever fair and splendid
 Lay betwixt his home and hers ;
 Parks with oak and chestnut shady,
 Parks and order'd gardens great,
 Ancient homes of lord and lady,
 But for pleasure and for state.
 All he shows her makes him dearer :
 Evermore she seems to gaze
 On that cottage growing nearer,
 Where they twain will spend their
 days.

O but she will love him truly !
 He shall have a cheerful home ;
 She will order all things duly,
 When beneath his roof they come.
 Thus her heart rejoices greatly,
 Till a gateway she discerns
 With armorial bearings stately,
 And beneath the gate she turns ;
 Sees a mansion more majestic
 Than all those she saw before :
 Many a gallant gay domestic
 Bows before him at the door.
 And they speak in gentle murmur,
 When they answer to his call,
 While he treads with footstep firmer,
 Leading on from hall to hall.
 And, while now she wonders blindly,
 Nor the meaning can divine,
 Proudly turns he round and kindly,
 " All of this is mine and thine."

Here he lives in state and bounty,
 Lord of Burleigh, fair and free,
 Not a lord in all the county
 Is so great a lord as he.
 All at once the colour flushes
 Her sweet face from brow to chin :
 As it were with shame she blushes,
 And her spirit changed within.

Then her countenance all over
 Pale again as death did prove :
 But he clasp'd her like a lover,
 And he cheer'd her soul with love.
 So she strove against her weakness,
 Tho' at times her spirits sank :
 Shaped her heart with woman's meek-
 ness

To all duties of her rank :
 And a gentle consort made he,
 And her gentle mind was such
 That she grew a noble lady,
 And the people loved her much.
 But a trouble weigh'd upon her,
 And perplex'd her, night and morn,
 With the burthen of an honour
 Unto which she was not born.
 Faint she grew, and ever fainter,
 As she murmur'd, " Oh that he
 Were once more that landscape-
 painter,

Which did win my heart from me !"
 So she droop'd and droop'd before him,
 Fading slowly from his side :
 Three fair children first she bore him,
 Then before her time she died.
 Weeping, weeping late and early,
 Walking up and pacing down,
 Deeply mourn'd the Lord of Burleigh,
 Burleigh-house by Stamford-town.
 And he came to look upon her,
 And he look'd at her and said,
 " Bring the dress and put it on her,
 That she wore when she was wed."
 Then her people, softly treading,
 Bore to earth her body, drest
 In the dress that she was wed in,
 That her spirit might have rest.

SIR LAUNCELOT AND QUEEN GUINEVERE

A FRAGMENT

LIKE souls that balance joy and pain,
 With tears and smiles from heaven
 again

The maiden Spring upon the plain
 Came in a sun-lit fall of rain.

In crystal vapour everywhere
 Blue isles of heaven laugh'd between,
 And, far in forest-deeps unseen,
 The topmost elmtree gather'd green
 From draughts of balmy air.

Sometimes the linnet piped his song :
 Sometimes the throstle whistled
 strong :

Sometimes the sparrowhawk, wheel'd
 along,
 Hush'd all the groves from fear of
 wrong :

By grassy capes with fuller sound
 In curves the yellowing river ran,
 And drooping chestnut-buds began
 To spread into the perfect fan,
 Above the teeming ground.

Then, in the boyhood of the year,
 Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere
 Rode thro' the coverts of the deer,
 With blissful treble ringing clear.
 She seem'd a part of joyous
 Spring :

A gown of grass-green silk she wore,
 Buckled with golden clasps before ;
 A light-green tuft of plumes she bore
 Closed in a golden ring.

Now on some twisted ivy-net,
 Now by some tinkling rivulet,
 In mosses mixt with violet
 Her cream-white mule his pastern set :
 And fleetly now she skimm'd the
 plains
 Than she whose elfin prancer springs
 By night to eery warblings,
 When all the glimmering moorland
 rings
 With jingling bridle-reins.

As she fled fast thro' sun and shade,
 The happy winds upon her play'd,
 Blowing the ringlet from the braid :
 She look'd so lovely, as she sway'd
 The rein with dainty finger-tips,
 A man had given all other bliss,
 And all his worldly worth for this,
 To waste his whole heart in one kiss
 Upon her perfect lips.

A FAREWELL

Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea,
Thy tribute wave deliver :
No more by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

Flow, softly flow, by lawn and lea,
A rivulet then a river :
Nowhere by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

But here will sigh thine alder tree,
And here thine aspen shiver ;
And here by thee will hum the bee,
For ever and for ever.

A thousand suns will stream on thee,
A thousand moons will quiver ;
But not by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

He rode a horse with wings, that
would have flown,
But that his heavy rider kept him
down.
And from the palace came a child of
sin,
And took him by the curls, and led
him in,
Where sat a company with heated
eyes,
Expecting when a fountain should
arise :
A sleepy light upon their brows and
lips—
As when the sun, a crescent of eclipse,
Dreams over lake and lawn, and isles
and capes—
Suffused them, sitting, lying, languid
shapes,
By heaps of gourds, and skins of
wine, and piles of grapes.

THE BEGGAR MAID

Her arms across her breast she laid ;
She was more fair than words can
say :
Bare-footed came the beggar maid
Before the king Cophetua.
In robe and crown the king stepped down,
To meet and greet her on her way ;
"It is no wonder," said the lords,
"She is more beautiful than day."

As shines the moon in clouded skies,
She in her poor attire was seen :
One praised her ankles, one her eyes,
One her dark hair and lovesome
mien.
So sweet a face, such angel grace,
In all that land had never been :
Cophetua sware a royal oath :
"This beggar maid shall be my
queen !"

THE VISION OF SIN

I

I HAD a vision when the night was
late :
A youth came riding toward a palace-
gate.

Then methought I heard a mellow
sound,
Gathering up from all the lower
ground ;
Narrowing in to where they sat
assembled
Low voluptuous music winding
trembled,
Wov'n in circles : they that heard it
sigh'd,
Panted hand in hand with faces pale,
Swung themselves, and in low tones
replied ;
Till the fountain spouted, showering
wide
Sleet of diamond-drift and pearly
hail ;
Then the music touch'd the gates and
died ;
Rose again from where it seem'd to
fail,
Storm'd in orbs of song, a growing
gale ;
Till thronging in and in, to where they
waited,
As 'twere a hundred-throated night-
ingale,
The strong tempestuous treble
throb'd and palpitated ;
Ran into its giddiest whirl of sound,
Caught the sparkles, and in circles,

Purple gauzes, golden hazes, liquid
mazes,

iv

Flung the torrent rainbow round :
Then they started from their places,
Moved with violence, changed in hue,
Caught each other with wild grimaces,
Half-invisible to the view,
Wheeling with precipitate paces
To the melody, till they flew,
Hair, and eyes, and limbs, and faces,
Twisted hard in fierce embraces,
Like to Furies, like to Graces,
Dash'd together in blinding dew :
Till, kill'd with some luxurious agony,
The nerve-dissolving melody
Flutter'd headlong from the sky.

" Wrinkled ostler, grim and thin !
Here is custom come your way ;
Take my brute, and lead him in,
Stuff his ribs with mouldy hay.

" Bitter barmaid, waning fast !
See that sheets are on my bed ;
What ! the flower of life is past :
It is long before you wed.

" Slip-shod waiter, lank and sour,
At the Dragon on the heath !
Let us have a quiet hour,
Let us hob-and-nob with Death.

" I am old, but let me drink ;
Bring me spices, bring me wine ;
I remember, when I think,
That my youth was half divine.

And then I look'd up toward a moun-
tain-tract,

That girt the region with high cliff and
lawn :

I saw that every morning, far with-
drawn

Beyond the darkness and the cata-
ract,

God made himself an awful rose of
dawn,

Unheeded : and detaching, fold by
fold,

From those still heights, and, slowly
drawing near,

A vapour heavy, hueless, formless,
cold,

Came floating on for many a month
and year,

Unheeded : and I thought I would
have spoken,

And warn'd that madman ere it grew
too late :

But, as in dreams, I could not. Mine
was broken,

When that cold vapour touch'd the
palace gate,

And link'd again. I saw within my
head

A gray and gap-tooth'd man as lean
as death,

Who slowly rode across a wither'd
heath,

And lighted at a ruin'd inn, and said :

" Wine is good for shrivell'd lips,
When a blanket wraps the day,
When the rotten woodland drips,
And the leaf is stamp'd in clay.

" Sit thee down, and have no shame,
Cheek by jowl, and knee by knee :
What care I for any name ?
What for order or degree ?

" Let me screw thee up a peg :
Let me loose thy tongue with wine :
Callest thou that thing a leg ?
Which is thinnest ? thine or mine ?

" Thou shalt not be saved by works :
Thou hast been a sinner too :
Ruin'd trunks on wither'd forks,
Empty scarecrows, I and you !

" Fill the cup, and fill the can :
Have a rouse before the morn :
Every moment dies a man,
Every moment one is born.

" We are men of ruin'd blood ;
Therefore comes it we are wise.
Fish are we that love the mud,
Rising to no fancy-flies.

" Name and fame ! to fly sublime
Thro' the courts, the camps, the
schools,
Is to be the ball of Time,
Banded by the hands of fools.

" Friendship !—to be two in one—
Let the canting liar pack !
Well I know, when I am gone,
How she mouths behind my back.

" Virtue !—to be good and just—
Every heart, when sifted well,
Is a clot of warmer dust,
Mix'd with cunning sparks of hell.

" O ! we two as well can look
Whited thought and cleanly life
As the priest, above his book
Leering at his neighbour's wife.

" Fill the cup, and fill the can :
Have a rouse before the morn :
Every moment dies a man,
Every moment one is born.

" Drink, and let the parties rave :
They are fill'd with idle spleen ;
Rising, falling, like a wave,
For they know not what they mean.

" He that roars for liberty
Faster binds a tyrant's power ;
And the tyrant's cruel glee
Forces on the freer hour.

" Fill the can, and fill the cup :
All the windy ways of men
Are but dust that rises up,
And is lightly laid again.

" Greet her with applause breath,
Freedom, gaily doth she tread ;
In her right a civic wreath,
In her left a human head.

" No, I love not what is new ;
She is of an ancient house :
And I think we know the hue
Of that cap upon her brows.

" Let her go ! her thirst she slakes
Where the bloody conduit runs :
Then her sweetest meal she makes
On the first-born of her sons.

" Drink to lofty hopes that cool—
Visions of a perfect State :
Drink we, last, the public fool,
Frantic love and frantic hate.

" Chant me now some wicked stave,
Till thy drooping courage rise,
And the glow-worm of the grave
Glimmer in thy rheumy eyes.

" Fear not thou to loose thy tongue ;
Set thy hoary fancies free ;
What is loathsome to the young
Savours well to thee and me.

" Change, reverting to the years,
When thy nerves could understand
What there is in loving tears,
And the warmth of hand in hand.

" Tell me tales of thy first love—
April hopes, the fools of chance ;
Till the graves begin to move,
And the dead begin to dance.

" Fill the can, and fill the cup :
All the windy ways of men
Are but dust that rises up,
And is lightly laid again.

" Trooping from their mouldy dens
The chap-fallen circle spreads :
Welcome, fellow-citizens,
Hollow hearts and empty heads !

" You are bones, and what of that ?
Every face, however full,
Padded round with flesh and fat,
Is but modell'd on a skull.

" Death is king, and Vivat Rex !
Tread a measure on the stones,
Madam—if I know your sex,
From the fashion of your bones.

" No, I cannot praise the fire
In your eye—nor yet your lip :
All the more do I admire
Joints of cunning workmanship.

" Lo ! God's likeness—the ground-
plan—
Neither modell'd, glazed, or
framed :
Buss me, thou rough sketch of man,
Far too naked to be shamed !

"Drink to Fortune, drink to Chance,
While we keep a little breath!
Drink to heavy Ignorance!
Hob-and-nob with brother Death!

"Thou art mazed, the night is long,
And the longer night is near:
What! I am not all as wrong
As a bitter jest is dear.

"Youthful hopes, by scores, to all,
When the locks are crisp and curl'd;
Unto me my maudlin gall
And my mockeries of the world.

"Fill the cup, and fill the can!
Mingle madness, mingle scorn!
Dregs of life, and lees of man:
Yet we will not die forlorn."

The voice grew faint: there came a
further change:

Once more uprose the mystic moun-
tain-range:

Below were men and horses pierced
with worms,

And slowly quickening into lower
forms;

By shards and scurf of salt, and scum
of dross,

Old splash of rains, and refuse patch'd
with moss.

Then some one spake: "Behold! it
was a crime

Of sense avenged by sense that wore
with time."

Another said: "The crime of sense
became

The crime of malice, and is equal
blame."

And one: "He had not wholly
quench'd his power;

A little grain of conscience made him
sour."

At last I heard a voice upon the
slope

Cry to the summit, "Is there any
hope?"

To which an answer peal'd from that
high land,

But in a tongue no man could under-
stand;

And on the glimmering limit far with-
drawn
God made Himself an awful rose of
dawn.

COME not, when I am dead,
To drop thy foolish tears upon my
grave,

To trample round my fallen head,
And vex the unhappy dust thou
wouldst not save.

There let the wind sweep and the
plover cry;
But thou, go by.

Child, if it were thine error or thy
crime

I care no longer, being all unblest:
Wed whom thou wilt, but I am sick of
Time,

And I desire to rest.

Pass on, weak heart, and leave me
where I lie:

Go by, go by.

THE EAGLE

FRAGMENT

HE clasps the crag with hooked
hands;

Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ring'd with the azure world, he
stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

Move eastward, happy earth, and
leave

Yon orange sunset waning slow:
From fringes of the faded eve,

O, happy planet, eastward go;
Till over thy dark shoulder glow

Thy silver sister-world, and rise
To glass herself in dewy eyes

That watch me from the glen below.

Ah, bear me with thee, smoothly
borne,

Dip forward under starry light,
And move me to my marriage-morn,
And round again to happy night.

THE POET'S SONG

141

BREAK, break, break,

On thy cold gray stones, O Sea !
And I would that my tongue could
utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
That he shouts with his sister at
play !
O well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the
bay !

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill ;
But O for the touch of a vanish'd
hand,
And the sound of a voice that is
still !

Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea !
But the tender grace of a day that is
dead
Will never come back to me.

THE POET'S

The rain had fallen, i
He pass'd by the to
the street,
A light wind blew from
the sun,
And waves of shade
the wheat,
And he sat him down in a lonely place,
And chanted a melody loud and
sweet,
That made the wild-swan pause in
her cloud,
And the lark drop down at his feet.

The swallow stopt as he hunted the
bee,
The snake slipt under a spray,
The wild hawk stood with the down
on his beak,
And stared, with his foot on t'
prey,
And the nightingale thought,
have sung many songs,
But never a one so gay,
For he sings of what the world wi
When the years have died aw.

THE PRINCESS :

A MEDLEY

PROLOGUE

SIR WALTER VIVIAN all a summer's
day
Gave his broad lawns until the set of
sun
Up to the people : thither flock'd at
noon
His tenants, wife and child, and
thither half
The neighbouring borough with their
Institute
Of which he was the patron. I was
there
From college, visiting the son,—the
son
A Walter too,—with others of our set,
Five others : we were seven at
Vivian-place.

And me that morning Walter show'd
the house,
Greek, set with busts : from vases in
the hall
Flowers of all heavens, and lovelier
than their names,
Grew side by side ; and on the pave-
ment lay
Carved stones of the Abbey-ruin in
the park,
Huge Ammonites, and the first bones
of Time ;
And on the tables every clime and age
Jumbled together ; celts and calu-
mets,
Claymore and snowshoe, toys in lava,
fans
Of sandal, amber, ancient rosaries,
Laborious orient ivory sphere in
sphere,
The cursed Malayan crease, and
battle-clubs

From the isles of palm : and higher
on the walls,
Betwixt the monstrous horns of elk
and deer,
His own forefathers' arms and
armour hung.

And " this " he said " was Hugh's
at Agincourt ;
And that was old Sir Ralph's at
Ascalon :
A good knight he ! we keep a chronicle
With all about him "—which he
brought, and I
Dived in a hoard of tales that dealt
with knights
Half-legend, half-historic, counts and
kings
Who laid about them at their wills
and died ;
And mixt with these, a lady, one that
arm'd
Her own fair head, and sallying thro'
the gate,
Had beat her foes with slaughter from
her walls.

" O miracle of women," said the
book,
" O noble heart who, being strait-
besieged
By this wild king to force her to his
wish,
Nor bent, nor broke, nor shunn'd a
soldier's death,
But now when all was lost or seem'd
as lost—
Her stature more than mortal in the
burst
Of sunrise, her arm lifted, eyes on
fire—

Brake with a blast of trumpets from
 the gate,
 And, falling on them like a thunder-
 bolt,
 She trampled some beneath her
 horses' heels,
 And some were whelm'd with missiles
 of the wall,
 And some were push'd with lances
 from the rock,
 And part were drown'd within the
 whirling brook :
 O miracle of womanhood ! "

So sang the gallant glorious
 chronicle ;
 And, I all rapt in this, " Come out,"
 he said,
 " To the Abbey : there is Aunt Eliza-
 beth
 And sister Lilia with the rest." We
 went
 (I kept the book and had my finger in
 it)
 Down thro' the park : strange was
 the sight to me ;
 For all the sloping pasture murmur'd,
 sown
 With happy faces and with holiday.
 There moved the multitude, a thou-
 sand heads :
 The patient leaders of their Institute
 Taught them with facts. One rear'd
 a font of stone
 And drew, from butts of water on the
 slope,
 The fountain of the moment, playing
 now
 A twisted snake, and now a rain of
 pearls,
 Or steep-up spout whereon the gilded
 ball
 Danced like a wisp : and somewhat
 lower down
 A man with knobs and wires and vials
 fired
 A cannon : Echo answer'd in her
 sleep
 From hollow fields : and here were
 telescopes
 For azure views ; and there a group
 of girls .
 In circle waited, whom the electric
 shock

Dislink'd with shrieks and laughter :
 round the lake
 A little clock-work steamer paddling
 plied
 And shook the lilies : perch'd about
 the knolls
 A dozen angry models jetted steam :
 A petty railway ran : a fire-balloon
 Rose gem-like up before the dusky
 groves
 And dropt a fairy parachute and past :
 And there thro' twenty posts of tele-
 graph
 They flash'd a saucy message to and
 fro
 Between the mimic stations ; so that
 sport
 Went hand in hand with Science ;
 otherwise
 Pure sport : a herd of boys with
 clamour bowl'd
 And stump'd the wicket ; babies
 roll'd about
 Like tumbled fruit in grass ; and
 men and maids
 Arranged a country dance, and flew
 thro' light
 And shadow, while the twangling violin
 Struck up with Soldier-laddie, and
 overhead
 The broad ambrosial aisles of lofty
 lime
 Made noise with bees and breeze from
 end to end.

Strange was the sight and smacking
 of the time ;
 And long we gazed, but satiated at
 length
 Came to the ruins. High-arch'd and
 ivy-claspt,
 Of finest Gothic lighter than a fire.
 Thro' one wide chasm of time and
 frost they gave
 The park, the crowd, the house ; but
 all within
 The sward was trim as any garden
 lawn :
 And here we lit on Aunt Elizabeth,
 And Lilia with the rest, and lady
 friends
 From neighbour seats : and there was
 Ralph himself,

A broken statue propt against the wall,
 As gay as any. Lilia, wild with sport,
 Half child half woman as she was, had wound
 A scarf of orange round the stony helm,
 And robed the shoulders in a rosy silk,
 That made the old warrior from his ivied nook
 Glow like a sunbeam : near his tomb a feast
 Shone, silver-set ; about it lay the guests,
 And there we join'd them : then the maiden Aunt
 Took this fair day for text, and from it preach'd
 An universal culture for the crowd,
 And all things great ; but we, unworthier, told
 Of college : he had climb'd across the spikes,
 And he had squeezed himself betwixt the bars,
 And he had breath'd the Proctor's dogs ; and one
 Discuss'd his tutor, rough to common men,
 But honeying at the whisper of a lord ;
 And one the Master, as a rogue in grain
 Veneer'd with sanctimonious theory.
 But while they talk'd, above their heads I saw
 The feudal warrior lady-clad ; which brought
 My book to mind : and opening this I read
 Of old Sir Ralph a page or two that rang
 With tilt and tourney ; then the tale of her
 That drove her foes with slaughter from her walls,
 And much I praised her nobleness and "Where,"
 Ask'd Walter, patting Lilia's head (she lay
 Beside him) "lives there such a woman now ?"

Quick answer'd Lilia "There are thousands now
 Such women, but convention beats them down :
 It is but bringing up ; no more than that :
 You men have done it : how I hate you all !
 Ah, were I something great ! I wish I were
 Some mighty poetess, I would shame you then,
 That love to keep us children ! O I wish
 That I were some great Princess, I would build
 Far off from men a college like a man's,
 And I would teach them all that men are taught ;
 We are twice as quick !" And here she shook aside
 The hand that play'd the patron with her curls.

And one said smiling "Pretty were the sight
 If our old halls could change their sex, and flaunt
 With prudes for proctors, dowagers for deans,
 And sweet girl-graduates in their golden hair.
 I think they should not wear our rusty gowns,
 But move as rich as Emperor-moths, or Ralph
 Who shines so in the corner ; yet I fear,
 If there were many Lilias in the brood,
 However deep you might embower the nest,
 Some boy would spy it."
 At this upon the sward
 She tapt her tiny silken-sandal'd foot :
 "That's your light way ; but I would make it death
 For any male thing but to peep at us."

Petulant she spoke, and at herself she laugh'd ;
 A rosebud set with little wilful thorns,

And sweet as English air could make her, she :
 But Walter hail'd a score of names upon her,
 And "petty Ogress," and "ungrateful Puss,"
 And swore he long'd at college, only long'd,
 All else was well, for she-society. They boated and they cricketed ; they talk'd
 At wine, in clubs, of art, of politics ;
 They lost their weeks ; they vex'd the souls of deans ;
 They rode ; they betted ; made a hundred friends,
 And caught the blossom of the flying terms,
 But miss'd the mignonette of Vivian-place,
 The little hearth-flower Lilia. Thus he spoke,
 Part banter, part affection.
 "True," she said,
 "We doubt not that. O yes, you miss'd us much.
 I'll stake my ruby ring upon it you did."

 She held it out ; and as a parrot turns
 Up thro' gilt wires a crafty loving eye,
 And takes a lady's finger with all care,
 And bites it for true heart and not for harm,
 So he with Lilia's. Daintily she shriek'd
 And wrung it. "Doubt my word again !" he said.
 "Come, listen ! here is proof that you were miss'd :
 We seven stay'd at Christmas up to read ;
 And there we took one tutor as to read :
 The hard-grain'd Muses of the cube and square
 Were out of season : never man, I think,
 So moulder'd in a sinecure as he :
 For while our cloisters echo'd frosty feet,
 And our long walks were stript as bare as brooms,
 We did but talk you over, pledge you all
 In wassail ; often, like as many girls—
 Sick for the hollies and the yews of home—
 As many little trifling Liliæ—play'd Charades and riddles as at Christmas here,
 And *what's my thought* and *when* and *where* and *how*,
 And often told a tale from mouth to mouth
 As here at Christmas."
 She remember'd that :
 A pleasant game, she thought : she liked it more
 Than magic music, forfeits, all the rest.
 But these—what kind of tales did men tell men,
 She wonder'd, by themselves ?
 A half-disdain
 Perch'd on the pouted blossom of her lips :
 And Walter nodded at me ; "*He* began,
 The rest would follow, each in turn ; and so
 We forged a sevenfold story. Kind ? what kind ?
 Chimeras, crotchets, Christmas solecisms,
 Seven-headed monsters only made to kill
 Time by the fire in winter."
 "Kill him now,
 The tyrant ! kill him in the summer too,"
 Said Lilia ; "Why not now," the maiden Aunt.
 "Why not a summer's as a winter's tale ?
 A tale for summer as befits the time,
 And something it should be to suit the place,
 Heroic, for a hero lies beneath,
 Grave, solemn !"

Walter warp'd his mouth at this
To something so mock-solemn, that
I laugh'd

And Lilia woke with sudden-shrilling
mirth

An echo like a ghostly woodpecker,
Hid in the ruins; till the maiden
Aunt

(A little sense of wrong had touch'd
her face

With colour) turn'd to me with "As
you will;

Heroic if you will, or what you will,
Or be yourself your hero if you will."

"Take Lilia, then, for heroine,"
clamour'd he,

"And make her some great Princess,
six feet high,

Grand, epic, homicidal; and be you
The Prince to win her!"

"Then follow me, the Prince,"
I answer'd, "each be hero in his turn!

Seven and yet one, like shadows in a
dream.—

Heroic seems our Princess as re-
quired—

But something made to suit with
Time and place,

A Gothic ruin and a Grecian house,
A talk of college and of ladies' rights,

A feudal knight in shilken masquerade,
And, yonder, shrieks and strange

experiments
For which the good Sir Ralph had

burnt them all—
This *were* a medley! we should have

him back
Who told the 'Winter's tale' to do

it for us.
No matter: we will say whatever

comes.
And let the ladies sing us, if they

will,
From time to time, some ballad or a

song
To give us breathing-space."

So I began,
And therest follow'd: and the women

sang
Between the rougher voices of the

men,
Like linnets in the pauses of the wind:

And here I give the story and the
songs.

A PRINCE I was, blue-eyed, and fair
in face,

Of temper amorous, as the first of
May,

With lengths of yellow ringlets, like
a girl,

For on my cradle shone the Northern
star.

There lived an ancient legend in
our house.

Some sorcerer, whom a far-off grand-
sire burnt

Because he cast no shadow, had fore-
told,

Dying, that none of all our blood
should know

The shadow from the substance, and
that one

Should come to fight with shadows
and to fall.

For so, my mother said, the story ran.
And, truly, waking dreams were, more

or less,
An old and strange affection of the

house.
Myself too had weird seizures,

Heaven knows what:
On a sudden in the midst of men and

day,
And while I walk'd and talk'd as

heretofore,
I seem'd to move among a world of

ghosts,
And feel myself the shadow of a

dream.
Our great court-Galen poised his

gilt-head cane,
And paw'd his beard, and mutter'd

"catalepsy."
My mother pitying made a thousand

prayers;
My mother was as mild as any saint,

Half-canonized by all that look'd on
her,

So gracious was her tact and tender-
ness:

But my good father thought a king
a king;

He cared not for the affection of the
house;

He held his sceptre like a pedant's wand
 To lash offence, and with long arms and hands
 Reach'd out, and pick'd offenders from the mass
 For judgment.

(His father's fault) but given to starts and bursts
 Of revel; and the last, my other heart,
 And almost my half-self, for still we moved
 Together, twinn'd as horse's ear and eye.

Now it chanced that I
 had been,
 While life was yet in bud and blade,
 betroth'd
 To one, a neighbouring Princess :
 she to me
 Was proxy-wedded with a bootless calf
 At eight years old; and still from
 time to time
 Came murmurs of her beauty from
 the South,
 And of her brethren, youths of puis-
 sance;
 And still I wore her picture by my
 heart,
 And one dark tress; and all around
 them both
 Sweet thoughts would swarm as bees
 about their queen.

But when the days drew nigh that
 I should wed,
 My father sent ambassadors with furs
 And jewels, gifts, to fetch her: these
 brought back
 A present, a great labour of the
 loom;
 And therewithal an answer vague as
 wind:
 Besides, they saw the king; he took
 the gifts;
 He said there was a compact; that
 was true:
 But then she had a will; was he to
 blame?
 And maiden fancies; loved to live
 alone
 Among her women; certain, would
 not wed.

That morning in the presence room
 I stood
 With Cyril and with Florian, my two
 friends:
 The first, a gentleman of broken
 means

Now, while they spake, I saw my
 father's face
 Grow long and troubled like a rising
 moon,
 Inflamed with wrath: he started on
 his feet,
 Tore the king's letter, snow'd it down,
 and rent
 The wonder of the loom thro' warp
 and woof
 From skirt to skirt; and at the last
 he sware
 That he would send a hundred thou-
 sand men,
 And bring her in a whirlwind: then
 he chew'd
 The thrice turn'd cud of wrath, and
 cook'd his spleen,
 Communing with his captains of the
 war.

At last I spoke. "My father, let
 me go,
 It cannot be but some gross error lies
 In this report, this answer of a king,
 Whom all men rate as kind and
 hospitable:
 Or, maybe, I myself, my bride once
 seen,
 Whate'er my grief to find her less
 than fame,
 May rue the bargain made." And
 Florian said:
 "I have a sister at the foreign court,
 Who moves about the Princess; she,
 you know,
 Who wedded with a nobleman from
 thence:
 He, dying lately, left her, as I hear,
 The lady of three castles in that land:
 Thro' her this matter might be sifted
 clean."
 And Cyril whisper'd: "Take me
 with you too."

Then laughing " what, if these weird Like threaded spiders, one by one, we
 seizures come dropt,
 Upon you in those lands, and no one And flying reach'd the frontier : then
 near we crost
 To point you out the shadow from To a livelier land ; and so by tilth and
 the truth ! grange,
 Take me : I'll serve you better in a And vines, and blowing bosks of
 strait ; wilderness,
 I grate on rusty hinges here : " but We gain'd the mother-city thick with
 " No ! " towers,
 Roar'd the rough king, " you shall And in the imperial palace found the
 not ; we ourself king.
 Will crush her pretty maiden fancies
 dead
 In iron gauntlets : break the council
 up."

 But when the council broke, I rose
 and past
 Thro' the wild woods that hung about
 the town ;
 Found a still place, and pluck'd her
 likeness out ;
 Laid it on flowers, and watch'd it
 lying bathed
 In the green gleam of the dewy-tas-
 sell'd trees :
 What were those fancies ? wherefore
 break her troth ?
 Proud look'd the lips : but while I
 meditated
 A wind arose and rush'd upon the
 South,
 And shook the songs, the whispers and
 the shrieks
 Of the wild woods together ; and a
 Voice
 Went with it " Follow, follow, thou
 shalt win."

 Then, ere the silver sickle of that
 month
 Became her golden shield, I stole
 from court
 With Cyril and with Florian, unper-
 ceived,
 Cat-footed thro' the town and half in
 dread
 To hear my father's clamour at our
 backs
 With Ho! from some bay-window
 shake the night ;
 But all was quiet : from the bastion'd
 walls

 His name was Gama ; crack'd and
 small his voice,
 But bland the smile that like a wrink-
 ling wind
 On glassy water drove his cheek in
 lines ;
 A little dry old man, without a star,
 Not like a king : three days he feasted
 us,
 And on the fourth I spake of why we
 came,
 And my betroth'd, " You do us,
 Prince," he said,
 Airing a snowy hand and signet gem,
 " All honour. We remember love
 ourselves
 In our sweet youth : there did a
 compact pass
 Long summers back, a kind of cere-
 mony—
 I think the year in which our olives
 fail'd.
 I would you had her, Prince, with
 all my heart,
 With my full heart : but there were
 widows here,
 Two widows, Lady Psyche, Lady
 Blanche ;
 They fed her theories, in and out of
 place
 Maintaining that with equal hus-
 bandry
 The woman were an equal to the
 man.
 They harp'd on this ; with this our
 banquets rang ;
 Our dances broke and buzz'd in knot
 of talk ;
 Nothing but this ; my very ears were
 hot

To hear them: knowledge, so my daughter held,
 Was all in all: they had but been, she thought,
 As children; they must lose the child, assume
 The woman: then, Sir, awful odes she wrote,
 Too awful, sure, for what they treated of,
 But all she is and does is awful; odes
 About this losing of the child; and rhymes
 And dismal lyrics, prophesying change
 Beyond all reason: these the women sang;
 And they that know such things—I sought but peace;
 No critic I—would call them master-pieces:
 They master'd me. At last she begg'd a boon
 A certain summer-palace which I have
 Hard by your father's frontier: I said no,
 Yet being an easy man, gave it: and there,
 All wild to found an University
 For maidens, on the spur she fled; and more
 We know not,—only this: they see no men,
 Not ev'n her brother Arac, nor the twins
 Her brethren, tho' they love her, look upon her
 As on a kind of paragon; and I (Pardon me saying it) were much loth to breed
 Dispute betwixt myself and mine: but since
 (And I confess with right) you think me bound
 In some sort, I can give you letters to her;
 And yet, to speak the truth, I rate your chance
 Almost at naked nothing."

Thus the king;

And I, tho' nettled that he seem'd to slur

With garrulous ease and oily courtesies
 Our formal compact, yet, not less (all frets
 But chafing me on fire to find my bride)
 Went forth again with both my friends. We rode
 Many a long league back to the North. At last
 From hills, that look'd across a land of hope,
 We dropt with evening on a rustic town
 Set in a gleaming river's crescent-curve,
 Close at the boundary of the liberties;
 There, enter'd an old hostel, call'd mine host
 To council, plied him with his richest wines,
 And show'd the late-writ letters of the king.

He with a long low sibilant, stared
 As blank as death in marble; then exclaim'd
 Averring it was clear against all rules
 For any man to go: but as his brain
 Began to mellow, "If the king," he said,
 "Had given us letters, was he bound to speak?
 The king would bear him out;" and at the last—
 The summer of the vine in all his veins—
 "No doubt that we might make it worth his while.
 She once had past that way; he heard her speak;
 She scared him; life! he never saw the like;
 She look'd as grand as doomsday and as grave:
 And he, he revered his liege-lady there;
 He always made a point to post with mares;
 His daughter and his housemaid were the boys:

The land, he understood, for miles about
 Was till'd by women; all the swine were sows,
 And all the dogs "—
 But while he jested thus,
 A thought flash'd thro' me which I clothed in act,
 Remembering how we three presented Maid
 Or Nymph, or Goddess, at high tide of feast,
 In masque or pageant at my father's court.
 We sent mine host to purchase female gear;
 He brought it, and himself, a sight to shake
 The midriff of despair with laughter, help
 To lace us up, till, each, in maiden plumes
 We rustled: him we gave a costly bribe
 To guerdon silence, mounted our good steeds,
 And boldly ventured on the liberties.

 We follow'd up the river as we rode,
 And rode till midnight when the college lights
 Began to glitter firefly-like in copse
 And linden alley: then we past an arch,
 Whereon a woman-statue rose with wings
 From four wing'd horses dark against the stars;
 And some inscription ran along the front,
 But deep in shadow: further on we gain'd
 A little street half garden and half house;
 But scarce could hear each other speak for noise
 Of clocks and chimes, like silver hammers falling
 On silver anvils, and the splash and stir
 Of fountains spouted up and showering down
 In meshes of the jasmine and the rose:

 And all about us peal'd the nightingale,
 Rapt in her song, and careless of the snare.

 There stood a bust of Pallas for a sign,
 By two sphere lamps blazon'd like Heaven and Earth
 With constellation and with continent,
 Above an entry: riding in, we call'd;
 A plump-arm'd Ostleress and a stable wench
 Came running at the call, and help'd us down.
 Then stept a buxom hostess forth, and sail'd,
 Full-blown, before us into rooms which gave
 Upon a pillar'd porch, the bases lost
 In laurel: her we ask'd of that and this,
 And who were tutors. "Lady Blanche," she said,
 "And Lady Psyche." "Which was prettiest,
 Best-natured?" "Lady Psyche." "Hers are we."
 One voice, we cried; and I sat down and wrote,
 In such a hand as when a field of corn
 Bows all its ears before the roaring East;

 "Three ladies of the Northern empire pray
 Your Highness would enroll them with your own,
 As Lady Psyche's pupils."

 This I seal'd:
 The seal was Cupid bent above a scroll,
 And o'er his head Uranian Venus hung,
 And raised the blinding bandage from his eyes:
 I gave the letter to be sent with dawn;
 And then to bed, where half in doze I seem'd
 To float about a glimmering night, and watch
 A full sea glazed with muffled moonlight, swell

On some dark shore just seen that
it was rich.

As thro' the land at eve we went,
And pluck'd the ripen'd ears,
We fell out, my wife and I,
O we fell out I know not why,
And kiss'd again with tears.
And blessings on the falling out
That all the more endears,
When we fall out with those we love
And kiss again with tears !
For when we came where lies the child
We lost in other years,
There above the little grave,
O there above the little grave,
We kiss'd again with tears.

At break of day the College Portress
came :

She brought us Academic silks, in hue
The lilac, with a silken hood to each,
And zoned with gold ; and now when
these were on,

And we as rich as moths from dusk
cocoons,

She, curtseying her obeisance, let us
know

The Princess Ida waited : out we
paced,

I first, and following thro' the porch
that sang

Allround with laurel, issued in a court
Compact with lucid marbles, boss'd
with lengths

Of classic frieze, with ample awnings
gay

Betwixt the pillars, and with great
urns of flowers.

The Muses and the Graces, group'd
in threes,

Enring'd a billowing fountain in the
midst ;

And here and there on lattice edges
lay

Or book or lute ; but hastily we past,
And up a flight of stairs into the hall.

There at a board by tome and paper
sat,

With two tame leopards couch'd be-
side her throne,

All beauty compass'd in a female
form,

The Princess ; liker to the inhabitant

Of some clear planet close upon the
Sun,

Than our man's earth ; such eyes
were in her head,

And so much grace and power,
breathing down

From over her arch'd brows, with
every turn

Lived thro' her to the tips of her long
hands,

And to her feet. She rose her height,
and said :

" We give you welcome : not with-
out redound

Of use and glory to yourselves ye
come,

The first-fruits of the stranger :
aftertime,

And that full voice which circles
round the grave,

Will rank you nobly, mingled up with
me.

What ! are the ladies of your land so
tall ? "

" We of the court," said Cyril. " From
the court "

She answer'd, " then ye know the
Prince ? " and he :

" The climax of his age ! as tho' there
were

One rose in all the world, your High-
ness that,

He worships your ideal : " she replied :

" We scarcely thought in our own
hall to hear

This barren verbiage, current among
men,

Light coin, the tinsel clink of compli-
ment.

Your flight from out your bookless
wilds would seem

As arguing love of knowledge and of
power ;

Your language proves you still the
child. Indeed,

We dream not of him : when we set
our hand

To this great work, we purposed with
ourselves

Never to wed. You likewise will do
well,

Ladies, in entering here, to cast and
fling

The tricks, which make us toys of men, that so,
Some future time, if so indeed you will,
You may with those self-styled our lords ally
Your fortunes, justlier balanced, scale with scale."

At those high words, we conscious of ourselves,
Perused the matting; then an officer Rose up, and read the statutes, such as these:
Not for three years to correspond with home;
Not for three years to cross the liberties;
Not for three years to speak with any men;
And many more, which hastily subscribed,
We enter'd on the boards: and "Now" she cried
"Ye are green wood, see ye warp not. Look, our hall!
Our statues!—not of those that men desire,
Sleek Odalisques, or oracles of mode,
Nor stunted squaws of West or East; but she
That taught the Sabine how to rule, and she
The foundress of the Babylonian wall,
The Carian Artemisia strong in war,
The Rhodope, that built the pyramid, Clelia, Cornelia, with the Palmyrene
That fought Aurelian, and the Roman brows
Of Agrippina. Dwell with these, and lose
Convention, since to look on noble forms
Makes noble thro' the sensuous organism
That which is higher. O lift your natures up:
Embrace our aims: work out your freedom. Girls,
Knowledge is now no more a fountain seal'd:
Drink deep, until the habits of the slave,

The sins of emptiness, gossip and spite
And slander, die. Better not be at all
Than not be noble. Leave us: you may go:
To-day the Lady Psyche will harangue
The fresh arrivals of the week before;
For they press in from all the provinces,
And fill the hive."

Shespoke, and bowing waved
Dismissal: back again we crost the court
To Lady Psyche's: as we enter'd in,
There sat along the forms, like morning doves
That sun their milky bosoms on the thatch,
A patient range of pupils; she herself
Erect behind a desk of satin-wood,
A quick brunette, well-moulded, falcon-eyed,
And on the hither side, or so she look'd,
Of twenty summers. At her left, a child,
In shining draperies, headed like a star,
Her maiden babe, a double April old,
Aglaia slept. We sat: the Lady glanced:
Then Florian, but no livelier than the dame
That whisper'd "Asses' ears" among the sedge,
"My sister," "Comely too by all that's fair"
Said Cyril. "O hush, hush!" and she began.

"This world was once a fluid haze of light,
Till toward the centre set the starry tides,
And eddied into suns, that wheeling cast
The planets: then the monster, then the man;
Tattoo'd or woaded, winter-clad in skins,
Raw from the prime, and crushing down his mate:

As yet we find in barbarous isles, and here
 Among the lowest." Thereupon she took
 A bird's-eye-view of all the ungracious past;
 Glanced at the legendary Amazon As emblematic of a nobler age;
 Appraised the Lycian custom, spoke of those
 That lay at wine with Lar and Lucumo;
 Ran down the Persian, Grecian, Roman lines
 Of empire, and the woman's state in each,
 How far from just; till warming with her theme
 She fulminated out her scorn of laws Salique
 And little-footed China, touch'd on Mahomet
 With much contempt, and came to chivalry:
 When some respect, however slight, was paid
 To woman, superstition all awry: However then commenced the dawn:
 a beam Had slanted forward, falling in a land
 Of promise; fruit would follow. Deep, indeed,
 Their debt of thanks to her who first had dared
 To leap the rotten pales of prejudice,
 Disyoke their necks from custom, and assert
 None lordlier than themselves but that which made
 Woman and man. She had founded; they must build.
 Here might they learn whatever men were taught:
 Let them not fear: some said their heads were less:
 Some men's were small; not they the least of men;
 For often fineness compensated size: Besides the brain was like the hand,
 and grew With using; thence the man's, if more was more;
 He took advantage of his strength to be
 First in the field: some ages had been lost;
 But woman ripen'd earlier, and her life
 Was longer; and albeit their glorious names
 Were fewer, scatter'd stars, yet since in truth
 The highest is the measure of the man,
 And not the Kaffir, Hottentot, Malay, Nor those horn-handed breakers of
 the glebe, But Homer, Plato, Verulam; even so
 With woman: and in arts of government
 Elizabeth and others; arts of war The peasant Joan and others; arts
 of grace Sappho and others vied with any
 man: And, last not least, she who had left
 her place, And bow'd her state to them, that
 they might grow To use and power on this Oasis, lapt
 In the arms of leisure, sacred from the blight
 Of ancient influence and scorn. At last
 She rose upon a wind of prophecy Dilating on the future; "everywhere
 Two heads in council, two beside the hearth,
 Two in the tangled business of the world,
 Two in the liberal offices of life, Two plummets dropt for one to sound
 the abyss Of science, and the secrets of the
 mind: Musician, painter, sculptor, critic, more:
 And everywhere the broad and bounteous Earth
 Should bear a double growth of those rare souls,
 Poets, whose thoughts enrich the blood of the world."

She ended here, and beckon'd us the rest

Parted ; and, glowing full-faced wel-
 come, she
 Began to address us, and was moving
 on
 In gratulation, till as when a boat
 Tacks, and the slacken'd sail flaps, all
 her voice
 Faltering and fluttering in her throat,
 she cried
 " My brother ! " " Well, my sister."
 " O " she said
 " What do you here ? and in this
 dress ? and these ?
 Why who are these ? a wolf within
 the fold !
 A pack of wolves ! the Lord be gra-
 cious to me !
 A plot, a plot, a plot, to ruin all ! "
 " No plot, no plot," he answer'd.
 " Wretched boy,
 How saw you not the inscription on
 the gate,
 LET NO MAN ENTER IN ON PAIN OF
 DEATH ? "
 " And if I had " he answer'd " who
 could think
 The softer Adams of your Academe,
 O sister, Sirens tho' they be, were
 such
 As chanted on the blanching bones of
 men ? "
 " But you will find it otherwise " she
 said.
 " You jest : ill jesting with edge-
 tools ! my vow
 Binds me to speak, and O that iron
 will,
 That axelike edge unturnable, our
 Head,
 The Princess." " Well then, Psyche,
 take my life,
 And nail me like a weasel on a grange
 For warning : bury me beside the
 gate,
 And cut this epitaph above my bones ;
*Here lies a brother by a sister slain,
 All for the common good of woman-
 kind."*
 " Let me die too " said Cyril " having
 seen
 And heard the Lady Psyche."
 I struck in :
 " Albeit so mask'd, Madam, I love
 the truth ;

Receive it ; and in me behold the
 Prince
 Your countryman, affianced years
 ago
 To the Lady Ida : here, for here she
 was,
 And thus (what other way was left) I
 came."
 " O Sir, O Prince, I have no country ;
 none ;
 If any, this ; but none. Whate'er I
 was
 Disrooted, what I am is grafted here.
 Affianced, Sir ? love-whispers may
 not breathe
 Within this vestal limit, and how
 should I,
 Who am not mine, say, live : the
 thunderbolt
 Hangs silent ; but prepare : I speak ;
 it falls."
 " Yet pause," I said : " for that
 inscription there,
 I think no more of deadly lurks
 therein,
 Than in a clapper clapping in a garth,
 To scare the fowl from fruit : if more
 there be,
 If more and acted on, what follows ?
 war ;
 Your own work marr'd : for this
 your Academe,
 Whichever side be Victor, in the
 halloo
 Will topple to the trumpet down, and
 pass
 With all fair theories only made to
 gild
 A stormless summer." " Let the
 Princess judge
 Of that " she said : " farewell Sir—
 and to you.
 I shudder at the sequel, but I go."

" Are you that Lady Psyche " I
 rejoin'd,
 " The fifth in line from that old
 Florian,
 Yet hangs his portrait in my father's
 hall
 (The gaunt old Baron with his beetle
 brow
 Sun-shaded in the heat of dusty
 fights)

As he bestrode my Grandsire, when he fell,	In gentler days, your arrow-wounded fawn
And all else fled : we point to it, and we say,	Came flying while you sat beside the well ?
The loyal warmth of Florian is not cold,	The creature laid his muzzle on your lap,
But branches current yet in kindred veins."	And sobb'd, and you sobb'd with it, and the blood
"Are you that Psyche " Florian added " she	Was sprinkled on your kirtle, and you wept.
With whom I sang about the morn- ing hills,	That was fawn's blood, not brother's, yet you wept.
Flung ball, flew kite, and raced the purple fly,	O by the bright head of my little niece,
And snared the squirrel of the glen ? are you	You were that Psyche, and what are you now ? "
That Psyche, wont to bind my throbb- ing brow,	" You are that Psyche " Cyril said again,
To smoothe my pillow, mix the foam- ing draught	" The mother of the sweetest little maid,
Of fever, tell me pleasant tales, and read	That ever crow'd for kisses."
My sickness down to happy dreams ? are you	" Out upon it ! "
That brother-sister Psyche, both in one ?	She answer'd, " peace ! and why should I not play
You were that Psyche, but what are you now ? "	The Spartan Mother with emotion, be
" You are that Psyche," Cyril said, " for whom	The Lucius Junius Brutus of my kind ? Him you call great : he for the com- mon weal,
I would be that for ever which I seem	The fading politics of mortal Rome, As I might slay this child, if good need were,
Woman, if I might sit beside your feet,	Slew both his sons : and I, shall I, on whom
And glean your scatter'd sapience. '	The secular emancipation turns
Then once more,	Of half this world, be swerved from right to save
' Are you that Lady Psyche " I be- gan,	A prince, a brother ? a little will I yield.
' That on her bridal morn before she past	Best so, perchance, for us, and well for you.
From all her old companions, when the king	O hard, when love and duty clash ! I fear
Kiss'd her pale cheek, declared that ancient ties	My conscience will not count me fleckless ; yet—
Would still be dear beyond the southern hills ;	Hear my conditions : promise (other- wise
That were there any of our people there	You perish) as you came, to slip away, To-day, to-morrow, soon : it shall be said,
n want or peril, there was one to hear	These women were too barbarous, would not learn ;
and help them : look ! for such are these and I."	They fled, who might have shamed us : promise, all."
' Are you that Psyche " Florian ask'd " to whom,	

What could we else, we promised
each ; and she,
Like some wild creature newly-caged,
commenced

A to-and-fro, so pacing till she paused
By Florian ; holding out her lily
arms

Took both his hands, and smiling
faintly said :

" I knew you at the first : tho' you
have grown

You scarce have alter'd : I am sad and
glad

To see you, Florian. I give thee to
death

My brother ! it was duty spoke, not I.
My needful seeming harshness, par-
don it.

Our mother, is she well ? "

With that she kiss'd

His forehead, then, a moment after,
clung

About him, and betwixt them blos-
som'd up

From out a common vein of memory
Sweet household talk, and phrases of
the hearth,

And far allusion, till the gracious dew
Began to glisten and to fall : and
while

They stood, so rapt, we gazing, came
a voice,

" I brought a message here from
Lady Blanche."

Back started she, and turning round
we saw

The Lady Blanche's daughter where
she stood,

Melissa, with her hand upon the lock,
A rosy blonde, and in a college gown,
That clad her like an April daffodilly
(Her mother's colour) with her lips
apart,

And all her thoughts as fair within
her eyes,

As bottom agates seen to wave and
float

In crystal currents of clear morning
seas.

So stood that same fair creature at
the door.

Then Lady Psyche " Ah—Melissa—
you !

You heard us ? " and Melissa, " O
pardon me !

I heard, I could not help it, did not
wish :

But, dearest Lady, pray you fear me
not,

Nor think I bear that heart within my
breast,

To give three gallant gentlemen to
death."

" I trust you " said the other " for
we two

Were always friends, none closer, elm
and vine :

But yet your mother's jealous tem-
perament—

Let not your prudence, dearest,
drowse, or prove

The Danaïd of a leaky vase, for fear
This whole foundation ruin, and I lose
My honour, these their lives." " Ah,
fear me not "

Replied Melissa " no—I would not
tell,

No, not for all Aspasia's cleverness,
No, not to answer, Madam, all those
hard things

That Sheba came to ask of Solomon."
" Be it so " the other " that we still
may lead

The new light up, and culminate in
peace,

For Solomon may come to Sheba
yet."

Said Cyril " Madam, he the wisest
man

Feasted the woman wisest then, in
halls

Of Lebanonian cedar : nor should you
(Thro' madam you should answer, we
would ask)

Less welcome find among us, if you
came

Among us, debtors for our lives to you,
Myself for something more." He said
not what,

But " Thanks," she answer'd " go :
we have been too long

Together : keep your hoods about
the face ;

They do so that affect abstraction
here.

Speak little ; mix not with the rest ;
and hold

Your promise : all, I trust, may yet
be well."

We turn'd to go, but Cyril took the
child,
And held her round the knees against
his waist,
And blew the swoll'n cheek of a
trumpeter,
Whilst Psyche watch'd them, smiling,
and the child
Push'd her flat hand against his face
and laugh'd;
And thus our conference closed.

And then we stroll'd
For half the day thro' stately theatres
Bench'd crescent-wisè. In each we
sat, we heard

The grave Professor. On the lecture
slate

The circle rounded under female
hands

With flawless demonstration : follow'd
then

A classic lecture, rich in sentiment,
With scraps of thundrous Epic lilted
out

By violet-hooded Doctors, elegies
And quoted odes, and jewels five-
words-long

That on the stretch'd forefinger of all
Time

Sparkle for ever : then we dipt in all
That treats of whatsoever is, the state,
The total chronicles of man, the mind,
The morals, something of the frame,
the rock,

The star, the bird, the fish, the shell,
the flower,

Electric, chemic laws, and all the rest,
And whatsoever can be taught and
known ;

Till like three horses that have broken
fence,

And glutted all night long breast-deep
in corn,

We issued gorged with knowledge,
and I spoke :

" Why, Sirs, they do all this as well
as we."

" They hunt old trails " said Cyril
" very well ;

But when did woman ever yet in-
vent ? "

" Ungracious ! " answer'd Florian,
" have you learnt

No more from Psyche's lecture, you
that talk'd

The trash that made me sick, and
almost sad ? "

" O trash " he said " but with a ker-
nel in it.

Should I not call her wise, who made
me wise ?

And learnt ? I learnt more from her
in a flash,

Than if my brainpan were an empty
hull,

And every Muse tumbled a science
in.

A thousand hearts lie fallow in these
halls,

And round these halls a thousand
baby loves

Fly twanging headless arrows at the
hearts,

Whence follows many a vacant pang ;
but O

With me, Sir, enter'd in the bigger
boy,

The Head of all the golden-shafted
firm,

The long-limb'd lad that had a Psyche
too ;

He cleft me thro' the stomacher ;
and now

What think you of it, Florian ? do I
chase

The substance or the shadow ? will it
hold ?

I have no sorcerer's malison on me,
No ghostly hauntings like his High-
ness. I

Flatter myself that always every-
where

I know the substance when I see it.
Well,

Are castles shadows ? Three of
them ? Is she

The sweet proprietress a shadow ?
If not,

Shall those three castles patch my
tatter'd coat ?

For dear are those three castles to
my wants,

And dear is sister Psyche to my heart,
And two dear things are one of double
worth,

And much I might have said, but Of faded form and haughtiest lineaments,
 that my zone
 Unmann'd me: then the Doctors With all her autumn tresses falsely
 O to hear brown,
 The Doctors! O to watch the Shot sidelong daggers at us, a tiger-
 thirsty plants cat
 Imbibing! once or twice I thought to In act to spring.
 roar, At last a solemn grace
 To break my chain, to shake my Concluded, and we sought the gar-
 mane: but thou, dens: there
 Modulate me, Soul of mincing mimi- One walk'd reciting by herself, and
 cry! one
 Make liquid treble of that bassoon, In this hand held a volume as to
 my throat; read,
 Abase those eyes that ever loved to And smoothed a petted peacock down
 meet with that:
 Star-sisters answering under crescent Some to a low song oar'd a shallop
 brows; by,
 Abate the stride, which speaks of man, Or under arches of the marble
 and loose bridge
 A flying charm of blushes o'er this Hung, shadow'd from the heat: some
 cheek, hid and sought
 Where they like swallows coming In the orange thickets: others tost
 out of time a ball
 Will wonder why they came: but Above the fountain-jets, and back
 hark the bell again
 For dinner, let us go!" With laughter: others lay about the
 And in we stream'd lawns,
 Among the columns, pacing staid and Of the older sort, and murmur'd that
 still their May
 By twos and threes, till all from end Was passing: what was learning unto
 to end them?
 With beauties every shade of brown They wish'd to marry; they could
 and fair, rule a house;
 In colours gayer than the morning Men hated learned women: but we
 mist, three
 The long hall glitter'd like a bed of Sat muffled like the Fates; and often
 flowers. came
 How might a man not wander from Melissa hitting all we saw with shafts
 his wits 'Of gentle satire, kin to charity,
 Pierced thro' with eyes, but that I That harm'd not: then day droopt;
 kept mine own the chapel bells
 Intent on her, who rapt in glorious Call'd us: we left the walks; we
 dreams, mixt with those
 The second-sight of some Astræan Six hundred maidens clad in purest
 age, white,
 Sat compass'd with professors: they, Before two streams of light from wall
 the while, to wall,
 Discuss'd a doubt and tost it to and While the great organ almost burst
 fro: his pipes,
 A clamour thicken'd, mixt with in- Groaning for power, and rolling thro'
 most terms the court
 Of art and science: Lady Blanche A long melodious thunder to the
 alone sound

Of solemn psalms, and silver litanies,
The work of Ida, to call down from
Heaven

A blessing on her labours for the
world

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
Wind of the western sea!
Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon, and blow,
Blow him again to me;
While my little one, while my pretty one,
sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
Father will come to thee soon;
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
Father will come to thee soon;
Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the west
Under the silver moon:
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one,
sleep.

III

Morn in the white wake of the morn-
ing star
Came furrowing all the orient into
gold.
We rose, and each by other drest with
care
Descended to the courts that lay
three parts
In shadow, but the Muses' heads
were touch'd
Above the darkness from their native
East.

There while we stood beside the
fount, and watch'd
Or seem'd to watch the dancing
bubble, approach'd
Melissa, tinged with wan from lack
of sleep,
Or grief, and glowing round her dewy
eyes
The circled Iris of a night of tears;
"And fly" she cried, "O fly,
while yet you may!
My mother knows:" and when I
ask'd her "how"
"My fault" she wept "my fault!
and yet not mine;

Yet mine in part. O hear me, pardon
me.

My mother, 'tis her wont from night
to night

To rail at Lady Psyche and her side.
She says the Princess should have
been the Head,

Herself and Lady Psyche the two
arms;

And so it was agreed when first they
came;

But Lady Psyche was the right hand
now,

And she the left, or not, or seldom
used;

Hers more than half the students, all
the love.

And so last night she fell to canvass
you:

Her countrywomen! she did not envy
her.

"Who ever saw such wild barbarians?
Girls?—more like men!" and at
these words the snake,

My secret, seem'd to stir within my
breast;

And oh, Sirs, could I help it, but my
cheek

Began to burn and burn, and her lynx
eye

To fix and make me hotter, till she
laugh'd:

"O marvellously modest maiden,
you!

Men! girls, like men! why, if they
had been men

You need not set your thoughts in
rubric thus

For wholesale comment." Pardon,
I am shamed

That I must needs repeat for my
excuse

What looks so little graceful:
"men" (for still

My mother went revolving on the
word)

"And so they are,—very like men
indeed—

And with that woman closeted for
hours!"

Then came these dreadful words out
one by one,

"Why—these—*are*—men:" I shud-
der'd: "and you know it."

"O ask me nothing," I said : " And But when your sister came she won
 she knows too, the heart
 And she conceals it." So my mother Of Ida : they were still together,
 clutch'd grew
 The truth at once, but with no word (For so they said themselves) inoscu-
 from me ; lated ;
 And now thus early risen she goes to Consonant chords that shiver to one
 inform note ;
 The Princess : Lady Psyche will be One mind in all things : yet my mother
 crush'd ; still
 But you may yet be saved, and there- Affirms your Psyche thieved her
 fore fly : theories,
 But heal me with your pardon ere you And angled with them for her pupil's
 go." love :
 " What pardon, sweet Melissa, for She calls her plagiarist ; I know not
 a blush ? " what :
 Said Cyril : " Pale one, blush again : But I must go : I dare not tarry," and
 than wear light,
 Those lilies, better blush our lives As flies the shadow of a bird, she fled.
 away.
 Yet let us breathe for one hour more Then murmur'd Florian gazing
 in Heaven " after her.
 He added, lest some classic Angel " An open-hearted maiden, true and
 speak pure.
 In scorn of us, ' they mounted, Gany- If I could love, why this were she :
 medes, how pretty
 To tumble, Vulcans, on the second Her blushing was, and how she
 morn.' blush'd again,
 But I will melt this marble into wax As if to close with Cyril's random
 To yield us farther furlough : " and wish :
 he went. Not like your Princess cramm'd with
 erring pride,
 Nor like poor Psyche whom she drags
 in tow."

Melissa shook her doubtful curls,
 and thought
 He scarce would prosper. " Tell us,"
 Florian ask'd,
 " How grew this feud betwixt the The crane," I said, " may chatter
 right and left." of the crane,
 " O long ago," she said, " betwixt The dove may murmur of the dove,
 these two but I
 Division smoulders hidden ; 'tis my An eagle clang an eagle to the sphere.
 mother, My princess, O my princess ! true she
 Too jealous, often fretful as the wind errs,
 Pent in a crevice : much I bear with But in her own grand way : being
 her : herself
 I never knew my father, but she says Three times more noble than three-
 (God help her) she was wedded to a score of men,
 fool ; She sees herself in every woman else,
 And still she rail'd against the state And so she wears her error like a
 of things. crown
 She had the care of Lady Ida's youth, To blind the truth and me : for her,
 And from the Queen's decease she and her,
 brought her up. Hebes are they to hand ambrosia, mix
 The nectar ; but—ah she—whene'er she moves

The Samian Herè rises and she speaks
A Memnon smitten with the morning
Sun."

So saying from the court we paced,
and gain'd
The terrace ranged along the Northern
front,
And leaning there on those balusters,
high
Above the empurpled champaign,
drank the gale
That blown about the foliage under-
neath,
And sated with the innumerable rose,
Beat balm upon our eyehds. Hither
came
Cyril, and yawning "O hard task,"
he cried;
"No fighting shadows here! I forced
a way
Thro' solid opposition crabb'd and
gnarl'd.
Better to clear prime forests, heave
and thump
A league of street in summer solstice
down,
Than hammer at this reverend gentle-
woman.
I knock'd and, bidden, enter'd;
found her there
At point to move, and settled in her
eyes
The green malignant light of coming
storm.
Sir, I was courteous, every phrase
well-oil'd,
As man's could be; yet maiden-
meek I pray'd
Concealment: she demanded who
we were,
And why we came? I fabled nothing
fair,
But, your example pilot, told her all.
Up went the hush'd amaze of hand
and eye.
But when I dwelt upon your old
affiance,
She answer'd sharply that I talk'd
astray.
I urged the fierce inscription on the
gate,
And our three lives. True—we had
limed ourselves

With open eyes, and we must take the
chance.

But such extremes, I told her, well
might harm

The woman's cause. "Not more
than now," she said,
"So puddled as it is with favouritism."
I tried the mother's heart. Shame
might befall

Melissa, knowing, saying not she
knew:

Her answer was "Leave me to deal
with that."

I spoke of war to come and many
deaths,

And she replied, her duty was to
speak,

And duty duty, clear of consequences.
I grew discouraged, Sir; but since I
knew

No rock so hard but that a little wave
May beat admission in a thousand
years,

I recommenced; "Decide not ere you
pause.

I find you here but in the second
place,

Some say the third—the authentic
foundress you.

I offer boldly: we will seat you
highest:

Wink at our advent: help my prince
to gain

His rightful bride, and here I promise
you

Some palace in our land, where you
shall reign

The head and heart of all our fair
she-world,

And your great name flow on with
broadening time

For ever." Well, she balanced this
a little,

And told me she would answer us
to-day,

Meantime be mute: thus much, nor
more I gain'd."

He ceasing, came a message from
the Head.

That afternoon the Princess rode
to take

The dip of certain strata to the North.

Would we go with her? we should find the land
 Worth seeing; and the river made a fall
 Out yonder: "then she pointed on to where
 A double hill ran up his furrowy forks
 Beyond the thick-leaved platans of the vale.

 Agreed to, this, the day fled on thro' all
 Its range of duties to the appointed hour.
 Then summon'd to the porch we went. She stood
 Among her maidens, higher by the head,
 Her back against a pillar, her foot on one
 Of those tame leopards. Kittenlike he roll'd
 And paw'd about her sandal. I drew near;
 I gazed. On a sudden my strange seizure came
 Upon me, the weird vision of our house:
 The Princess Ida seem'd a hollow show,
 Her gay-furr'd cats a painted fantasy,
 Her college and her maidens, empty masks,
 And I myself the shadow of a dream,
 For all things were and were not. Yet I felt
 My heart beat thick with passion and with awe;
 Then from my breast the involuntary sigh
 Brake, as she smote me with the light of eyes
 That lent my knee desire to kneel, and shook
 My pulses, till to horse we got, and so
 Went forth in long retinue following up
 The river as it narrow'd to the hills.

 I rode beside her and to me she said:
 "O friend, we trust that you esteem'd us not
 Too harsh to your companion yesterday;
 Unwillingly we spake." "No—not to her,"
 I answer'd, "but to one of whom we spake
 Your Highness might have seem'd the thing you say."
 "Again?" she cried "are you ambassadresses
 From him to me? we give you, being strange,
 A license: speak, and let the topic die."

 I stammer'd that I knew him—could have wish'd—
 "Our king expects—was there no precontract?"
 There is no truer-hearted—ah, you seem
 All he refigured, and he could not see
 The bird of passage flying south but long'd
 To follow: surely, if your Highness keep
 Your purport, you will shock him ev'n to death,
 Or baser courses, children of despair."

 "Poor boy" she said "can he not read—no books?
 Quoits, tennis, ball—no games? nor deals in that
 Which men delight in, martial exercise?
 To nurse a blind ideal like a girl,
 Methinks he seems no better than a girl;
 As girls were once, as we ourself have been:
 We had our dreams: perhaps he mixt with them:
 We touch on our dead self, nor shun to do it,
 Being other—since we learnt our meaning here,
 To lift the woman's fall'n divinity
 Upon an even pedestal with man."

 She paused, and added with a haughtier smile
 "And as to precontracts, we move, my friend,

At no man's beck, but know ourself and thee,
 O Vashti, noble Vashti! Summon'd out
 She kept her state, and left the drunken king
 To brawl at Shushan underneath the palms."

"Alas your Highness breathes full East," I said,
 "On that which leans to you. I know the Prince,
 I prize his truth: and then how vast a work
 To assail this gray preëminence of man!
 You grant me license; might I use it? think;
 Ere half be done perchance your life may fail;
 Then comes the feebler heiress of your plan,
 And takes and ruins all; and thus your pains
 May only make that footprint upon sand
 Which old-recurring waves of pre-judice
 Resmooth to nothing: might I dread that you,
 With only Fame for spouse and your great deeds
 For issue, yet may live in vain, and miss,
 Meanwhile, what every woman counts her due,
 Love, children, happiness?"

And she exclaim'd,
 "Peace, you young savage of the Northern wild!
 What! tho' your Prince's love were like a God's,
 Have we not made ourself the sacrifice?
 You are bold indeed: we are not talk'd to thus:
 Yet will we say for children, would they grew
 Like field-flowers everywhere! we like them well:
 But children die; and let me tell you, girl,

Howe'er you babble, great deeds cannot die:
 They with the sun and moon renew their light
 For ever, blessing those that look on them.
 Children—that men may pluck them from our hearts,
 Kill us with pity, break us with ourselves—
 O—children—there is nothing upon earth
 More miserable than she that has a son
 And sees him err: nor would we work for fame;
 Tho' she perhaps might reap the applause of Great,
 Who learns the one for so whence after-hands
 May move the world, tho' she herself effect
 But little: wherefore up and act, nor shrink
 For fear our solid aim be dissipated
 By frail successors. Would, indeed, we had been,
 In lieu of many mortal flies, a race
 Of giants living, each, a thousand years,
 That we might see our own work out, and watch
 The sandy footprint harden into stone."

I answer'd nothing, doubtful in myself
 If that strange Poet-princess with her grand
 Imaginations might at all be won.
 And she broke out interpreting my thoughts:
 "No doubt we seem a kind of monster to you;
 We are used to that: for women, up till this
 Cramp'd under worse than South-sea-isle taboo,
 Dwarfs of the gynæceum, fail so far
 In high desire, they know not, cannot guess
 How much their welfare is a passion to us.

If we could give them surer, quicker
 proof—
 Oh if our end were less achievable
 By slow approaches, than by single
 act
 Of immolation, any phase of death,
 We were as prompt to spring against
 the pikes,
 Or down the fiery gulf as talk of it,
 To compass our dear sisters' liberties.'

She bow'd as if to veil a noble tear ;
 And up we came to where the river
 sloped
 To plunge in cataract, shattering on
 black blocks
 A breadth of thunder. O'er it shook
 the woods,
 And danced the colour, and, below,
 stuck out
 The bones of some vast bulk that
 lived and roar'd
 Before man was. She gazed awhile
 and said,
 "As these rude bones to us, are we
 to her
 That will be." "Dare we dream of
 that," I ask'd,
 "Which wrought us, as the workman
 and his work,
 That practice betters?" "How,"
 she cried, "you love
 The metaphysics I read and earn our
 prize,
 A golden broach: beneath an
 emerald plane
 Sits Diotima, teaching him that died
 Of hemlock; our device; wrought
 to the life;
 She rapt upon her subject, he on her:
 For there are schools for all." "And
 yet" I said
 "Methinks I have not found among
 them all
 One anatomic." "Nay, we thought
 of that,"
 She answer'd, "but it pleased us
 not: in truth
 We shudder but to dream our maids
 should ape
 Those monstrous males that carve
 the living hound,
 And cram him with the fragments of
 the grave,

Or in the dark dissolving human
 heart,
 And holy secrets of this microcosm,
 Dabbling a shameless hand with
 shameful jest,
 Encarnalize their spirits: yet we
 know
 Knowledge is knowledge, and this
 matter hangs:
 Howbeit ourself, foreseeing casualty,
 Nor willing men should come among
 us, learnt,
 For many weary moons before we
 came,
 This craft of healing. Were you
 sick, ourself
 Would tend upon you. To your
 question now,
 Which touches on the workman and
 his work.
 Let there be light and there was
 light: 'tis so:
 For was, and is, and will be, are but
 is;
 And all creation is one act at once,
 The birth of light: but we that are
 not all,
 As parts, can see but parts, now this,
 now that,
 And live, perforce, from thought to
 thought, and make
 One act a phantom of succession:
 thus
 Our weakness somehow shapes the
 shadow, Time;
 But in the shadow will we work, and
 mould
 The woman to the fuller day."

She spake
 With kindled eyes: we rode a league
 beyond,
 And, o'er a bridge of pinewood cross-
 ing, came
 On flowery levels underneath the
 crag,
 Full of all beauty. "O how sweet"
 I said
 (For I was half-oblivious of my mask)
 "To linger here with one that loved
 us." "Yea"
 She answer'd "or with fair philo-
 sophies
 That lift the fancy; for indeed these
 fields

Are lovely, lovelier not the Elysian
lawns,

Where paced the Demigods of old,
and saw

The soft white vapour streak the
crowned towers

Built to the Sun : " then, turning to
her maids,

" Pitch our pavilion here upon the
sward ;

Lay out the viands." At the word,
they raised

A tent of satin, elaborately wrought
With fair Corinna's triumph ; here

she stood,

Engirt with many a florid maiden-
cheek,

The woman-conqueror ; woman-
conquer'd there

The bearded Victor of ten-thousand
hymns,

And all the men mourn'd at his side :
but we

Set forth to climb ; then, climbing,
Cyril kept

With Psyche, with Melissa Florian, I
With mine affianced. Many a little

hand

Glanced like a touch of sunshine on
the rocks,

Many a light foot shone like a jewel
set

In the dark crag : and then we turn'd,
we wound

About the cliffs, the copses, out and
in,

Hammering and clinking, chattering
stony names

Of shale and hornblende, rag and
trap and tuff,

Amygdaloid and trachyte, till the
Sun

Grew broader toward his death and
fell, and all

The rosy heights came out above the
lawns.

The splendour falls on castle walls

And snowy summits old in story :

The long light shakes across the lakes,

And the wild cataract leaps in glory.

Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes
flying,

Blow, bugle ; answer, echoes, dying,
dying, dying.

O hark, O hear ! how thin and clear,
And thinner, clearer, farther going !

O sweet and far from cliff and scar
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing !

Blow, let us hear the purple glens reply-
ing :

Blow, bugle ; answer, echoes, dying,
dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
They faint on hill or field or river :

Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And grow for ever and for ever.

Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes
flying.

And answer, echoes, answer, dying,
dying, dying.

iv

THERE sinks the nebulous star we call
the Sun,

If that hypothesis of theirs be sound "
Said Ida ; " let us down and rest ; "

and we

Down from the lean and wrinkled
precipices,

By every coppice-feather'd chasm
and cleft,

Dropt thro' the ambrosial gloom to
where below

No bigger than a glow-worm shone
the tent

Lamp-lit from the inner. Once she
lean'd on me,

Descending ; once or twice she leant
her hand,

And blissful palpitations in the blood,
Stirring a sudden transport rose and
fell.

But when we planted level feet,
and dipt

Beneath the satin dome and enter'd
in,

There leaning deep in broider'd down
we sank

Our elbows : on a tripod in the midst
A fragrant flame rose, and before us

glow'd

Fruit, blossom, viand, amber wine,
and gold.

Then she " Let some one sing to
us : lightlier move

The minutes fledged with music : " Answer'd the Princess " If indeed
 and a maid, there haunt
 Of those beside her, smote her harp, About the moulder'd lodges of the
 and sang. Past

"Tears, idle tears, I know not men,
 what they mean, Well needs it we should cram our ears
 Tears from the depth of some divine with wool
 despair And so pace by : but thine are fancies
 Rise in the heart, and gather to the hatch'd
 eyes, In silken-folded idleness ; nor is it
 In looking on the happy Autumn- Wisser to weep a true occasion lost,
 fields, But trim our sails, and let old by-gones
 And thinking of the days that are no be,
 more. While down the streams that float
 us each and all

" Fresh as the first beam glittering To the issue, goes, like glittering bergs
 on a sail, of ice,
 That brings our friends up from the Throne after throne, and molten on
 underworld, the waste
 Sad as the last which reddens over Becomes a cloud : for all things serve
 one their time
 That sinks with all we love below the Toward that great year of equal
 verge ; might and rights,
 So sad, so fresh, the days that are no Nor would I fight with iron laws, in
 more. the end

" Ah, sad and strange as in dark Found golden : let the past be past ;
 summer dawns let be
 The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd Their cancell'd Babels : tho' the
 birds rough kex break
 To dying ears, when unto dying eyes The starr'd mosaic, and the beard-
 The casement slowly grows a glim- blown goat
 mering square ; Hang on the shaft, and the wild fig-
 So sad, so strange, the days that are tree split
 no more. Their monstrous idols, care not while
 we hear

" Dear as remember'd kisses after A trumpet in the distance pealing
 death, news
 And sweet as those by hopeless fancy Of better, and Hope, a poising eagle,
 feign'd burns
 On lips that are for others ; deep as Above the unrisen morrow : " then
 love, to me ;
 Deep as first love, and wild with all " Know you no song of your own
 regret ; land," she said,
 O Death in Life, the days that are no " Not such as moans about the retro-
 more. spect,
 But deals with the other distance and
 the hues

She ended with such passion that Of promise ; not a death's-head at
 the tear, the wine."

She sang of, shook and fell, an erring
 pearl
 Lost in her bosom : but with some Then I remember'd one myself had
 disdain made,

What time I watch'd the swallow
 winging south
 From mine own land, part made long
 since, and part
 Now while I sang, and maidenlike as
 far
 As I could ape their treble, did I sing.

"O Swallow, Swallow, flying, fly-
 ing South,
 Fly to her, and fall upon her gilded
 eaves,
 And tell her, tell her, what I tell to
 thee.

"O tell her, Swallow, thou that
 knowest each,
 That bright and fierce and fickle is
 the South,
 And dark and true and tender is the
 North.

"O Swallow, Swallow, if I could
 follow, and light
 Upon her lattice, I would pipe and
 trill,
 And cheep and twitter twenty million
 loves.

"O were I thou that she might
 take me in,
 And lay me on her bosom, and her
 heart
 Would rock the snowy cradle till I
 died.

"Why lingereth she to clothe her
 heart with love,
 Delaying as the tender ash delays
 To clothe herself, when all the woods
 are green ?

"O tell her, Swallow, that thy
 brood is flown :
 Say to her, I do but wanton in the
 South,
 But in the North long since my nest
 is made.

"O tell her, brief is life but love is
 long,
 And brief the sun of summer in the
 North,
 And brief the moon of beauty in the
 South.

"O Swallow, flying from the golden
 woods,
 Fly to her, and pipe and woo her, and
 make her mine,
 And tell her, tell her, that I follow
 thee."

I ceased, and all the ladies, each
 at each,
 Like the Ithacensian suitors in old
 time,
 Stared with great eyes, and laugh'd
 with alien lips,
 And knew not what they meant ; for
 still my voice
 Rang false : but smiling "Not for
 thee," she said,
 "O Bulbul, any rose of Gulistan
 Shall burst her veil : marsh-divers,
 rather, maid,
 Shall croak thee sister, or the mead-
 ow-crake
 Grate her harsh kindred in the grass :
 and this
 A mere love-poem ! O for such, my
 friend,
 We hold them slight : they mind us
 of the time
 When we made bricks in Egypt.
 Knaves are men,
 That lute and flute fantastic tender-
 ness,
 And dress the victim to the offering
 up,
 And paint the gates of Hell with
 Paradise,
 And play the slave to gain the
 tyranny.
 Poor soul ! I had a maid of honour
 once ;
 She wept her true eyes blind for such
 a one,
 A rogue of canzonets and serenades.
 I loved her. Peace be with her. She
 is dead.
 So they blaspheme the muse ! But
 great is song
 Used to great ends : ourself have
 often tried
 Valkyrian hymns, or into rhythm
 have dash'd
 The passion of the prophetess ; for
 song

Is duer unto freedom, force and growth
 Of spirit than to junketing and love.
 Love is it? Would this same mock-
 love, and this
 Mock-Hymen were laid up like winter
 bats,
 Till all men grew to rate us at our
 worth,
 Not vassals to be beat, nor pretty
 babes
 To be dandled, no, but living wills,
 and sphered
 Whole in ourselves and owed to none.
 Enough!
 But now to leaven play with profit,
 you,
 Know you no song, the true growth
 of your soil,
 That gives the manners of your
 countrywomen? "

She spoke and turn'd her sumptuous
 head with eyes
 Of shining expectation fixt on mine.
 Then while I dragg'd my brains for
 such a song,
 Cyril, with whom the bell-mouth'd
 glass had wrought,
 Or master'd by the sense of sport,
 began
 To troll a careless, careless tavern-
 catch
 Of Moll and Meg, and strange experi-
 ences
 Unmeet for ladies. Florian nodded
 at him,
 I frowning; Psyche flush'd and
 wann'd and shook;
 The lilylike Melissa droop'd her
 brows;
 "Forbear" the Princess cried;
 "Forbear, Sir" I;
 And heated thro' and thro' with
 wrath and love,
 I smote him on the breast; he started
 up;
 There rose a shriek as of a city sack'd;
 Melissa clamour'd "Flee the death;"
 "To horse"
 Said Ida; "home! to horse!" and
 fled, as flies
 A troop of snowy doves athwart the
 dusk,

When some one batters at the dove-
 cote-doors,
 Disorderly the women. Alone I
 stood
 With Florian, cursing Cyril, vext at
 heart,
 In the pavilion: there like parting
 hopes
 I heard them passing from me: hoof
 by hoof,
 And every hoof a knell to my desires,
 Clang'd on the bridge; and then
 another shriek,
 "The Head, the Head, the Princess,
 O the Head!"
 For blind with rage she miss'd the
 plank, and roll'd
 In the river. Out I sprang from glow
 to gloom:
 There whirl'd her white robe like a
 blossom'd branch
 Rapt to the horrible fall: a glance I
 gave,
 No more; but woman-vested as I
 was
 Plunged; and the flood drew; yet
 I caught her; then
 Oaring one arm, and bearing in my
 left
 The weight of all the hopes of half the
 world,
 Strove to buffet to land in vain. A
 tree
 Was half-disrooted from his place
 and stoop'd
 To drench his dark locks in the gurg-
 ling wave
 Mid-channel. Right on this we drove
 and caught,
 And grasping down the boughs I
 gain'd the shore.

There stood her maidens glimmer-
 ingly group'd
 In the hollow bank. One reaching
 forward drew
 My burthen from mine arms; they
 cried "she lives:"
 They bore her back into the tent:
 but I,
 So much a kind of shame within me
 wrought,
 Not yet endured to meet her opening
 eyes,

Nor found my friends ; but push'd alone on foot
 (For since her horse was lost I left her mine)
 Across the woods, and less from Indian craft
 Than beelike instinct hiveward, found at length
 The garden portals. Two great statues, Art
 And Science, Caryatids, lifted up
 A weight of emblem, and betwixt were valves
 Of open-work in which the hunter rued
 His rash intrusion, manlike, but his brows
 Had sprouted, and the branches thereupon
 Spread out at top, and grimly spiked the gates.

A little space was left between the horns,
 Thro' which I clamber'd o'er at top with pain,
 Dropt on the sward, and up the linden walks,
 And, tost on thoughts that changed from hue to hue,
 Now poring on the glowworm, now the star,
 I paced the terrace, till the Bear had wheel'd
 Thro' a great arc his seven slow suns.

A step
 Of lightest echo, then a loftier form
 Than female, moving thro' the uncertain gloom,
 Disturb'd me with the doubt " if this were she "
 But it was Florian. " Hist O Hist," he said,
 " They seek us : out so late is out of rules.
 Moreover, ' seize the strangers ' is the cry.
 How came you here ? " I told him :
 " I " said he,
 " Last of the train, a moral leper, I,
 To whom none spake, half-sick at heart, return'd.
 Arriving all confused among the rest

With hooded brows I crept into the hall,
 And, couch'd behind a Judith, underneath
 The head of Holofernes peep'd and saw.
 Girl after girl was call'd to trial :
 each
 Disclaim'd all knowledge of us : last of all,
 Melissa : trust me, Sir, I pitied her.
 She, question'd if she knew us men, at first
 Was silent ; closer prest, denied it not :
 And then, demanded if her mother knew,
 Or Psyche, she affirm'd not, or denied :
 From whence the Royal mind, familiar with her,
 Easily gather'd either guilt. She sent
 For Psyche, but she was not there ; she call'd
 For Psyche's child to cast it from the doors ;
 She sent for Blanche to accuse her face to face ;
 And I slipt out : but whither will you now ?
 And where are Psyche, Cyril ? both are fled :
 What, if together ? that were not so well.
 Would rather we had never come ! I dread
 His wildness, and the chances of the dark."

" And yet," I said, " you wrong him more than I
 That struck him : this is proper to the clown,
 Tho' smock'd, or furr'd and purpled, still the clown,
 To harm the thing that trusts him, and to shame
 That which he says he loves : for Cyril, howe'er
 He deal in frolic, as to-night—the song
 Might have been worse and sinn'd in grosser lips

Beyond all pardon—as it is, I hold
These flashes on the surface are not
he.

He has a solid base of temperament :
But as the waterlily starts and slides
Upon the level in little puffs of wind,
Tho' anchor'd to the bottom, such is
he."

Scarce had I ceased when from a
tamarisk near
Two Proctors leapt upon us, crying,
" Names : "

He, standing still, was clutch'd ; but
I began

To thrird the musky-circled mazes,
wind

And double in and out the boles,
and race

By all the fountains : fleet I was of
foot :

Before me shower'd the rose in flakes ;
behind

I heard the puff'd pursuer ; at mine
ear

Bubbled the nightingale and heeded
not,

And secret laughter tickled all my
soul.

At last I hook'd my ankle in a vine,
That clapt the feet of a Mnemosyne,
And falling on my face was caught
and known.

They haled us to the Princess where
she sat

High in the hall : above her droop'd
a lamp,

And made the single jewel on her
brow

Burn like the mystic fire on a'mast-
head,

Prophet of storm : a handmaid on
each side

Bow'd toward her, combing out her
long black hair

Damp from the river ; and close be-
hind her stood

Eight daughters of the plough,
stronger than men,

Huge women blowzed with health,
and wind, and rain,

And labour. Each was like a Druid
rock ;

Or like a spire of land that stands
apart

Cleft from the main, and wail'd about
with mews.

Then, as we came, the crowd
dividing clove

An advent to the throne : and there
beside,

Half-naked as if caught at once from
bed

And tumbled on the purple footcloth,
lay

The lily-shining child ; and on the
left,

Bow'd on her palms and folded up
from wrong,

Her round white shoulder shaken
with her sobs,

Melissa knelt ; but Lady Blanche
erect

Stood up and spake, an affluent
orator.

" It was not thus, O Princess, in
old days :

You prized my counsel, lived upon
my lips :

I led you then to all the Castalies ;
I fed you with the milk of every Muse ;

I loved you like this kneeler, and you
me

Your second mother : those were
gracious times.

Then came your new friend : you
began to change—

I saw it and grieved—to slacken and
to cool ;

Till taken with her seeming openness
You turn'd your warmer currents all
to her,

To me you froze : this was my meed
for all.

Yet I bore up in part from ancient
love,

And partly that I hoped to win you
back,

And partly conscious of my own
deserts,

And partly that you were my civil
head,

And chiefly you were born for some-
thing great,

In which I might your fellow-worker be,
 When time should serve; and thus a noble scheme
 Grew up from seed we two long since had sown;
 In us true growth, in her a Jonah's gourd,
 Up in one night and due to sudden sun:
 We took this palace; but even from the first
 You stood in your own light and darken'd mine.
 What student came but that you planed her path
 To Lady Psyche, younger, not so wise, A foreigner, and I your country-woman,
 I your old friend and tried, she new in all?
 But still her lists were swell'd and mine were lean;
 Yet I bore up in hope she would be known:
 Then came these wolves: *they* knew her: *they* endured,
 Long-closeted with her the yestern-morn,
 To tell her what they were, and she to hear:
 And me none told: not less to an eye like mine,
 A lidless watcher of the public weal,
 Last night, their mask was patent, and my foot
 Was to you: but I thought again: I fear'd
 To meet a cold "We thank you, we shall hear of it
 From Lady Psyche:" you had gone to her,
 She told, perforce; and winning easy grace,
 No doubt, for slight delay, remain'd among us
 In our young nursery still unknown, the stem
 Less grain than touchwood, while my honest heat
 Were all miscounted as malignant haste
 To push my rival out of place and power.

But public use required she should be known;
 And since my oath was ta'en for public use,
 I broke the letter of it to keep the sense.
 I spoke not then at first, but watch'd them well,
 Saw that they kept apart, no mischief done;
 And yet this day (tho' you should hate me for it)
 I came to tell you; found that you had gone,
 Ridd'n to the hills, she likewise: now, I thought,
 That surely she will speak; if not, then I:
 Did she? These monsters blazon'd what they were,
 According to the coarseness of their kind,
 For thus I hear; and known at last (my work)
 And full of cowardice and guilty shame,
 I grant in her some sense of shame, she flies;
 And I remain on whom to wreak your rage,
 I, that have lent my life to build up yours,
 I that have wasted here health, wealth, and time,
 And talents, I—you know it—I will not boast:
 Dismiss me, and I prophesy your plan, Divorced from my experience, will be chaff
 For every gust of chance, and men will say
 We did not know the real light, but chased
 The wisp that flickers where no foot can tread."

She ceased: the Princess answer'd coldly "Good:
 Your oath is broken: we dismiss you: go.
 For this lost lamb (she pointed to the child)
 Our mind is changed: we take it to ourself."

Thereat the Lady stretch'd a vulture throat,
 And shot from crooked lips a haggard smile.
 "The plan was mine. I built the nest," she said ;
 "To hatch the cuckoo. Rise!" and stoop'd to updrag
 Melissa : she, half on her mother propt,
 Half-drooping from her, turn'd her face, and cast
 A liquid look on Ida, full of prayer,
 Which melted Florian's fancy as she hung,
 A Niobean daughter, one arm out, Appealing to the bolts of Heaven ; and while
 We gazed upon her came a little stir
 About the doors, and on a sudden rush'd
 Among us, out of breath, as one pursued,
 A woman-post in flying raiment. Fear
 Stared in her eyes, and chalk'd her face, and wing'd
 Her transit to the throne, whereby she fell
 Delivering seal'd dispatches which the Head
 Took half-amazed, and in her lion's mood
 Tore open, silent we with blind surmise
 Regarding, while she read, till over brow
 And check and bosom brake the wrathful bloom
 As of some fire against a stormy cloud,
 When the wild peasant rights himself, the rick
 Flames, and his anger reddens in the heavens ;
 For anger most it seem'd, while now her breast,
 Beaten with some great passion at her heart,
 Palpitated, her hand shook, and we heard
 In the dead hush the papers that she held
 Rustle : at once the lost lamb at her feet
 Sent out a bitter bleating for its dam ;
 The plaintive cry jarr'd on her ire ; she crush'd
 The scrolls together, made a sudden turn
 As if to speak, but, utterance failing her,
 She whirl'd them on to me, as who should say
 "Read" and I read—two letters—one her sire's,
 "Fair daughter, when we sent the Prince your way
 We knew not your ungracious laws, which learnt,
 We, conscious of what temper you are built,
 Came all in haste to hinder wrong, but fell
 Into his father's hands, who has this night,
 You lying close upon his territory, Slipt round and in the dark invested you,
 And here he keeps me hostage for his
 The second was my father's running thus :
 "You have our son : touch not a hair of his head :
 Render him up unscathed : give him your hand :
 Cleave to your contract : tho' indeed we hear
 You hold the woman is the better man ;
 A rampant heresy, such as if it spread
 Would make all women kick against their Lords
 Thro' all the world, and which might well deserve
 That we this night should pluck your palace down ;
 And we will do it, unless you send us back
 Our son, on the instant, whole."
 So far I read ;
 And then stood up and spoke impetuously.

"O not to pry and peer on your
 reserve,
 But led by golden wishes, and a hope
 The child of regal compact, did I
 break
 Your precinct; not a scorner of your
 sex
 But venerator, zealous it should be
 All that it might be: hear me, for
 I bear,
 Tho' man, yet human, whatsoe'er
 your wrongs,
 From the flaxen curl to the gray lock
 a life
 Less mine than yours: my nurse
 would tell me of you;
 I babbled for you, as babies for the
 moon,
 Vague brightness; when a boy, you
 stoop'd to me
 From all high places, lived in all fair
 lights,
 Came in long breezes rapt from in-
 most south
 And blown to inmost north; at eve
 and dawn
 With Ida, Ida, Ida, rang the woods;
 The leader wildswan in among the
 stars
 Would clang it, and lapt in wreaths
 of glowworm light
 The mellow breaker murmur'd Ida.
 Now,
 Because I would have reach'd you,
 had you been
 Sphered up with Cassiopëia, or the
 enthroned
 Persephone in Hades, now at length,
 Those winters of abeyance all worn
 out,
 A man I came to see you: but,
 indeed,
 Not in this frequency can I lend full
 tongue,
 O noble Ida, to those thoughts that
 wait
 On you, their centre: let me say but
 this,
 That many a famous man and woman,
 town
 And landskip, have I heard of, after
 seen
 The dwarfs of presage: tho' when
 known, there grew

Another kind of beauty in detail
 Made them worth knowing; but in
 you I found
 My boyish dream involved and
 dazzled down
 And master'd, while that after-beauty
 makes
 Such head from act to act, from hour
 to hour,
 Within me, that except you slay me
 here,
 According to your bitter statute-
 book,
 I cannot cease to follow you, as they
 say
 The seal does music; who desire
 you more
 Than growing boys their manhood;
 dying lips,
 With many thousand matters left to
 do,
 The breath of life; O more than poor
 men wealth,
 Than sick men health—yours, yours,
 not mine—but half
 Without you; with you, whole; and
 of those halves
 You worthiest; and howe'er you
 block and bar
 Your heart with system out from
 mine, I hold
 That it becomes no man to nurse
 despair,
 But in the teeth of clench'd antagon-
 isms
 To follow up the worthiest till he
 die:
 Yet that I came not all unauthorized
 Behold your father's letter."

On one knee
 Kneeling, I gave it, which she caught,
 and dash'd
 Unopen'd at her feet: a tide of fierce
 Invective seem'd to wait behind her
 lips,
 As waits a river level with the dam
 Ready to burst and flood the world
 with foam:
 And so she would have spoken, but
 there rose
 A hubbub in the court of half the
 maids
 Gather'd together: from the illu-
 mined hall

Long lanes of splendour slanted o'er
 a press
 Of snowy shoulders, thick as herded
 ewes,
 And rainbow robes, and gems and
 gemlike eyes,
 And gold and golden heads; they
 to and fro
 Fluctuated, as flowers in storm, some
 red, some pale,
 All open-mouth'd, all gazing to the
 light,
 Some crying there was an army in the
 land,
 And some that men were in the very
 walls,
 And some they cared not; till a
 clamour grew
 As of a new-world Babel, woman-
 built,
 And worse-confounded: high above
 them stood
 The placid marble Muses, looking
 peace.

Not peace she look'd, the Head:
 but rising up
 Robed in the long night of her deep
 hair, so
 To the open window moved, remain-
 ing there
 Fixt like a beacon-tower above the
 waves
 Of tempest, when the crimson-rolling
 eye
 Glares ruin, and the wild birds on the
 light
 Dash themselves dead. She stretch'd
 her arms and call'd
 Across the tumult and the tumult fell.

"What fear ye brawlers? am not
 I your Head?
 On me, me, me, the storm first breaks:
 I dare
 All these male thunderbolts: what
 is it ye fear?
 Peace! there are those to avenge us
 and they come:
 If not,—myself were like enough, O
 girls,
 To unfurl the maiden banner of our
 rights,
 And clad in iron burst the ranks of
 war,

Or, falling, protomartyr of our cause,
 Die: yet I blame you not so much
 for fear;
 Six thousand years of fear have made
 you that
 From which I would redeem you:
 but for those
 That stir this hubbub—you and you
 —I know
 Your faces there in the crowd—to-
 morrow morn
 We hold a great convention: then
 shall they
 That love their voices more than
 duty, learn
 With whom they deal, dismiss'd in
 shame to live
 No wiser than their mothers, house-
 hold stuff,
 Live chattels, mincers of each other's
 fame,
 Full of weak poison, turnspits for the
 clown,
 The drunkard's football, laughing-
 stocks of Time,
 Whose brains are in their hands and
 in their heels,
 But fit to flaunt, to dress, to dance,
 to thrum,
 To tramp, to scream, to burnish, and
 to scour,
 For ever slaves at home and fools
 abroad."

She, ending, waved her hands:
 thereat the crowd
 Muttering, dissolved: then with a
 smile, that look'd
 A stroke of cruel sunshine on the cliff,
 When all the glens are drown'd in
 azure gloom
 Of thunder-shower, she floated to us
 and said:
 "You have done well and like a
 gentleman,
 And like a prince: you have our
 thanks for all:
 And you look well too in your woman's
 dress:
 Well have you done and like a gentle-
 man.
 You saved our life: we owe you bitter
 thanks:

Better have died and spilt our bones
 in the flood—
 Then men had said—but now—What
 hinders me
 To take such bloody vengeance on you
 both?—
 Yet since our father—Wasps in our
 good hive,
 You would-be quenchers of the light
 to be,
 Barbarians, grosser than your native
 bears—
 O would I had his sceptre for one
 hour!
 You that have dared to break our
 bound, and gull'd
 Our servants, wrong'd and lied and
 thwarted us—
 I wed with thee! I bound by pre-
 contract
 Your bride, your bonds slave! not
 tho' all the gold
 That veins the world were pack'd
 to make your crown,
 And every spoken tongue should lord
 you. Sir,
 Your falsehood and yourself are hate-
 ful to us:
 I trample on your offers and on you:
 Begone: we will not look upon you
 more.
 Here, push them out at gates."
 In wrath she spake.
 Then those eight mighty daughters
 of the plough
 Bent their broad faces toward us and
 address'd
 Their motion: twice I sought to
 plead my cause,
 But on my shoulder hung their heavy
 hands,
 The weight of destiny: so from her
 face
 They push'd us, down the steps, and
 thro' the court,
 And with grim laughter thrust us
 out at gates.
 We cross'd the street and gain'd a
 petty mound
 Beyond it, whence we saw the lights
 and heard
 The voices murmuring. While I
 listen'd, came
 On a sudden the weird seizure and
 the doubt:
 I seem'd to move among a world of
 ghosts;
 The Princess with her monstrous
 woman-guard,
 The jest and earnest working side by
 side,
 The cataract and the tumult and the
 kings
 Were shadows; and the long fan-
 tastic night
 With all its doings had and had not
 been,
 And all things were and were not.
 This went by
 As strangely as it came, and on my
 spirits
 Settled a gentle cloud of melancholy;
 Not long; I shook it off; for spite
 of doubts
 And sudden ghostly shadowings I
 was one
 To whom the touch of all mischance
 but came
 As night to him that sitting on a hill
 Sees the midsummer, midnight, Nor-
 way sun
 Set into sunrise; then we moved
 away.
 Thy voice is heard thro' rolling drums,
 That beat to battle where he stands;
 Thy face across his fancy comes,
 And gives the battle to his hands:
 A moment, while the trumpets blow,
 He sees his brood about thy knee;
 The next, like fire he meets the foe,
 And strikes him dead for thine and
 thee.
 So Lilia sang: we thought her half-
 possess'd,
 She struck such warbling fury thro'
 the words;
 And, after, feigning pique at what she
 call'd
 The raillery, or grotesque, or false
 sublime—
 Like one that wishes at a dance to
 change
 The music—clapt her hands and cried
 for war,

Or some grand fight to kill and make
an end :

And he that next inherited the tale
Half turning to the broken statue,
said,

" Sir Ralph has got your colours : if
I prove

Your knight, and fight your battle,
what for me ? "

It chanced, her empty glove upon the
tomb

Lay by her like a model of her hand.
She took it and she flung it.

" Fight " she said,

" And make us all we would be, great
and good."

He knightlike in his cap instead of
casque,

A cap of Tyrol borrow'd from the hall,
Arranged the favour, and assumed
the Prince.

Now, scarce three paces measured
from the mound,

We stumbled on a stationary voice,
And " Stand, who goes ? " " Two
from the palace " I.

" The second two : they wait," he
said, " pass on ;

His Highness wakes : " and one, that
clash'd in arms,

By glimmering lanes and walls of
canvas, led

Threading the soldier-city, till we
heard

The drowsy folds of our great ensign
shake

From blazon'd lions o'er the imperial
tent

Whispers of war.

Entering, the sudden light
Dazed me half-blind : I stood and
seem'd to hear,

As in a poplar grove when a light wind
wakes

A hissing of the innumerable leaf and
dies,

Each hissing in his neighbour's ear ;
and then

A strangled titter, out of which there
brake

On all sides, clamouring etiquette to
death,

Unmeasured mirth ; while now the
two old kings

Began to wag their baldness up and
down,

The fresh young captains flash'd their
glittering teeth,

The huge bush-bearded Barons heaved
and blew,

And slain with laughter roll'd the
gilded Squire.

At length my Sire, his rough cheek
wet with tears,

Panted from weary sides " King, you
are free !

We did but keep you surety for our
son,

If this be he,—or a draggled mawkin,
thou,

That tends her bristled grunTERS in
the sludge : "

For I was drench'd with ooze, and
torn with briers,

More crumpled than a poppy from
the sheath,

And all one rag, disprinc'd from head
to heel.

Then some one sent beneath his
vaulted palm

A whisper'd jest to some one near
him " Look,

He has been among his shadows." " Satan take

The old women and their shadows !
(thus the King

Roar'd) make yourself a man to fight
with men.

Go : Cyril told us all."

As boys that slink
From ferule and the trespass-chiding
eye,

Away we stole, and transient in a
trice

From what was left of faded woman-
slough

To sheathing splendours and the
golden scale

Of harness, issued in the sun, that now
Leapt from the dewy shoulders of the
Earth,

And hit the Northern hills. Here
 Cyril met us,
 A little shy at first, but by and
 by
 We twain, with mutual pardon ask'd
 and given
 For stroke and song, resoldered peace,
 whereon
 Follow'd his tale. Amazed he fled
 away
 Thro' the dark land, and later in the
 night
 Had come on Psyche weeping : " then
 we fell
 Into your father's hand, and there
 she lies,
 But will not speak, nor stir,"
 He show'd a tent
 A stone-shot off : we enter'd in, and
 there
 Among piled arms and rough accou-
 trements,
 Pitiful sight, wrapp'd in a soldier's
 cloak,
 Like some sweet sculpture draped
 from head to foot,
 And push'd by rude hands from its
 pedestal,
 All her fair length upon the ground
 she lay :
 And at her head a follower of the
 camp,
 A charr'd and wrinkled piece of
 womanhood,
 Sat watching like a watcher by the
 dead.

Then Florian knelt and " Come "
 he whisper'd to her,
 " Lift up your head, sweet sister :
 lie not thus.
 What have you done but right ? you
 could not slay
 Me, nor your prince : look up : be
 comforted :
 Sweet is it to have done the thing one
 ought,
 When fall'n in darker ways." And
 likewise I :
 " Be comforted : have I not lost her
 too,
 In whose least act abides the name-
 less charm

That none has else for me ? " She
 heard, she moved,
 She moan'd, a folded voice ; and up
 she sat,
 And raised the cloak from brows as
 pale and smooth
 As those that mourn half-shrouded
 over death
 In deathless marble. " Her " she said
 " my friend—
 Parted from her—betrayed her cause
 and mine—
 Where shall I breathe ? why kept ye
 not your faith ?
 O base and bad ! what comfort ? none
 for me ! "
 To whom remorseful Cyril " Yet I
 pray
 Take comfort : live, dear lady, for
 your child ! "
 At which she lifted up her voice and
 cried.

" Ah me, my babe, my blossom,
 ah my child,
 My one sweet child, whom I shall see
 no more !
 For now will cruel Ida keep her back ;
 And either she will die from want of
 care,
 Or sicken with ill-usage, when they
 say
 The child is hers—for every little
 fault,
 The child is hers ; and they will beat
 my girl
 Remembering her mother : O my
 flower !
 Or they will take her, they will make
 her hard,
 And she will pass me by in after-life
 With some cold reverence worse than
 were she dead.
 Ill mother that I was to leave her
 there,
 To lag behind, scared by the cry they
 made,
 The horror of the shame among them
 all :
 But I will go and sit beside the doors,
 And make a wild petition night and
 day,
 Until they hate to hear me like a wind

Wailing for ever, till they open to me,
 And lay my little blossom at my feet,
 My babe, my sweet Aglaïa, my one child:
 And I will take her up and go my way,
 And satisfy my soul with kissing her:
 Ah! what might that man not deserve of me,
 Who gave me back my child? "Be comforted"
 Said Cyril "you shall have it:" but again
 She veil'd her brows, and prone she sank, and so
 Like tender things that being caught feign death,
 Spoke not, nor stirr'd.
 By this a murmur ran
 Thro' all the camp and inward raced the scouts
 With rumour of Prince Arac hard at hand.
 We left her by the woman, and without
 Found the gray kings at parle: and "Look you" cried
 My father "that our compact be fulfill'd:
 You have spoilt this child; she laughs at you and man:
 She wrongs herself, her sex, and me, and him:
 But red-faced war has rods of steel and fire;
 She yields, or war."
 Then Gama turn'd to me:
 "We fear, indeed, you spent a stormy time
 With our strange girl: and yet they say that still
 You love her. Give us, then, your mind at large:
 How say you, war or not?"
 "Not war, if possible,
 O king," I said, "lest from the abuse of war,
 The desecrated shrine, the trampled year,
 The smouldering homestead, and the household flower
 Torn from the lintel—all the common wrong—
 A smoke go up thro' which I loom to her
 Three times a monster: now she lightens scorn
 At him that mars her plan, but then would hate
 (And every voice she talk'd with ratify it,
 And every face she look'd on justify it)
 The general foe. More soluble is this knot,
 By gentleness than war. I want her love.
 What were I nigher this altho' we dash'd
 Your cities into shards with catapults,
 She would not love;—or brought her chain'd, a slave,
 The lifting of whose eyelash is my lord,
 Not ever would she love; but brooding turn
 The book of scorn, till all my little chance
 Were caught within the record of her wrongs,
 And crush'd to death: and rather, Sire, than this
 I would the old God of war himself were dead,
 Forgotten, rusting on his iron hills,
 Rotting on some wild shore with ribs of wreck,
 Or like an old-world mammoth bulk'd in ice,
 Not to be molten out."
 And roughly spake
 My father, "Tut, you know them not, the girls.
 Boy, when I hear you prate I almost think
 That idiot legend credible. Look you, Sir!
 Man is the hunter; woman is his game:
 The sleek and shining creatures of the chase,
 We hunt them for the beauty of their skins;

They love us for it, and we ride them down.
 Wheedling and siding with them !
 Out ! for shame !
 Boy, there's no rose that's half so dear to them
 As he that does the thing they dare not do,
 Breathing and sounding beauteous battle, comes
 With the air of the trumpet round him, and leaps in
 Among the women, snares them by the score
 Flatter'd and fluster'd, wins, tho' dash'd with death
 He reddens what he kisses : thus I won
 Your mother, a good mother, a good wife,
 Worth winning ; but this firebrand—gentleness
 To such as her ! if Cyril spake her true,
 To catch a dragon in a cherry net,
 To trip a tigress with a gossamer,
 Were wisdom to it."
 "Yea but Sir," I cried,
 "Wild natures need wise curbs.
 The soldier ? No :
 What dares not Ida do that she should prize
 The soldier ? I beheld her, when she rose
 The yesternight, and storming in extremes
 Stood for her cause, and flung defiance down
 Gagelike to man, and had not shunn'd the death,
 No, not the soldier's : yet I hold her, king,
 True woman : but you clash them all in one,
 That have as many differences as we.
 The violet varies from the lily as far
 As oak from elm : one loves the soldier, one
 The silken priest of peace, one this, one that,
 And some unworthily ; their sinless faith,
 A maiden moon that sparkles on a sty,
 Glorifying clown and satyr ; whence they need
 More breadth of culture : is not Ida right ?
 They worth it ? truer to the law within ?
 Severer in the logic of a life ?
 Twice as magnetic to sweet influences
 Of earth and heaven ? and she of whom you speak,
 My mother, looks as whole as some serene
 Creation minted in the golden moods
 Of sovereign artists ; not a thought, a touch,
 But pure as lines of green that streak the white
 Of the first snowdrop's inner leaves ; I say,
 Not like the piebald miscellany, man,
 Bursts of great heart and slips in sensual mire,
 But whole and one : and take them all-in-all,
 Were we ourselves but half as good, as kind,
 As truthful, much that Ida claims as right
 Had ne'er been mooted, but as frankly theirs
 As dues of Nature. To our point not war :
 Lest I lose all."
 "Nay, nay, you spake but sense"
 Said Gama. "We remember love ourself
 In our sweet youth ; we did not rate him then
 This red-hot iron to be shaped with blows.
 You talk almost like Ida : she can talk ;
 And there is something in it as you say :
 But you talk kindlier : we esteem you for it.—
 He seems a gracious and a gallant Prince,
 I would he had our daughter : for the rest,

Our own detention, why, the causes weigh'd,
 Fatherly fears—you used us courteously—
 We would do much to gratify your Prince—
 We pardon it; and for your ingress here
 Upon the skirt and fringe of our fair land,
 You did but come as goblins in the night,
 Nor in the furrow broke the ploughman's head,
 Nor burnt the grange, nor buss'd the milking-maid,
 Nor robb'd the farmer of his bowl of cream:
 But let your Prince (our royal word upon it,
 He comes back safe) ride with us to our lines,
 And speak with Arac: Arac's word is thrice
 As ours with Ida: something may be done—
 I know not what—and ours shall see us friends.
 You, likewise, our late guests, if so you will,
 Follow us: who knows? we four may build some plan
 Foursquare to opposition."

Here he reach'd

White hands of farewell to my sire, who growl'd
 An answer which, half-muffled in his beard,
 Let so much out as gave us leave to go.

Then rode we with the old king across the lawns
 Beneath huge trees, a thousand rings of Spring
 In every bole, a song on every spray
 Of birds that piped their Valentines, and woke
 Desire in me to infuse my tale of love
 In the old king's ears, who promised help, and oozed
 All o'er with honey'd answer as we rode;

And blossom-fragrant slipt the heavy dew
 Gather'd by night and peace, with each light air
 On our mail'd heads: but other thoughts than Peace
 Burnt in us, when we saw the embattled squares,
 And squadrons of the Prince, trampling the flowers
 With clamour: for among them rose a cry
 As if to greet the king; they made a halt;
 The horses yell'd; they clash'd their arms; the drum
 Beat; merrily-blowing shrill'd the martial fife;
 And in the blast and bray of the long horn
 And serpent-throated bugle, undulated
 The banner: anon to meet us lightly pranced
 Three captains out; nor ever had I seen
 Such thews of men: the midmost and the highest
 Was Arac: all about his motion clung
 The shadow of his sister, as the beam
 Of the East, that play'd upon them, made them glance
 Like those three stars of the airy Giant's zone,
 That glitter burnish'd by the frosty dark;
 And as the fiery Sirius alters hue,
 And bickers into red and emerald, shone
 Their morions, wash'd with morning, as they came.

And I that prated peace, when first I heard
 War-music, felt the blind wildbeast of force,
 Whose home is in the sinews of a man,
 Stir in me as to strike: then took the king
 His three broad sons; with now a wandering hand
 And now a pointed finger, told them all:

A common light of smiles at our disguise
 Broke from their lips, and, ere the windy jest
 Had labour'd down within his ample lungs,
 The genial giant, Arac, roll'd himself
 Thrice in the saddle, then, burst out
 in words.

"Our land invaded, 'sdeath ! and he himself
 Your captive, yet my father wills not war :

And, 'sdeath ! myself, what care I, war or no ?

But then this question of your troth remains :

And there's a downright honest meaning in her ;

She flies too high, she flies too high ! and yet

She ask'd but space and fairplay for her scheme ;

She prest and prest it on me—I myself,

What know I of these things ? but, life and soul !

I thought her half-right talking of her wrongs ;

I say she flies too high, 'sdeath ! what of that ?

I take her for the flower of woman-kind,

And so I often told her, right or wrong,

And, Prince, she can be sweet to those she loves,

And, right or wrong, I care not : this is all,

I stand upon her side : she made me swear it—

'Sdeath—and with solemn rites by candle-light—

Swear by St. something—I forget her name—

Her that talked down the fifty wisest men ;

She was a princess too ; and so I swore.

Come, this is all ; she will not : waive your claim :

If not, the foughten field, what else, at once

Decides it, 'sdeath ! against my father's will."

I lagg'd in answer loth to render up
 My precontract, and loth by brainless war

To cleave the rift of difference deeper yet ;

Till one of those two brothers, half aside

And fingering at the hair about his lip,

To prick us on to combat "Like to like !

The woman's garment hid the woman's heart."

A taunt that clench'd his purpose like a blow !

For fiery-short was Cyril's counter-scoff,

And sharp I answer'd, touch'd upon the point

Where idle boys are cowards to their shame,

"Decide it here : why not ? we are three to three."

Then spake the third "But three to three ? no more ?

No more, and in our noble sister's cause ?

More, more, for honour : every captain waits

Hungry for honour, angry for his king.

More, more, some fifty on a side, that each

May breathe himself, and quick ! by overthrow

Of these or those, the question settled die."

"Yea" answer'd I "for this wreath of air,

This flake of rainbow flying on the highest

Foam of men's deeds—this honour if ye will.

It needs must be for honour if—"

Since, what decision ? if—fail,

And if we win, we fail : she would not keep

Her compact." " 'Sdeath! but we
 will send to her,"
 Said Arac, " worthy reasons why she
 should
 Bide by this issue: let our missive
 thro',
 And you shall have her answer by the
 word."

" Boys!" shrieked the old king,
 but vainlier than a hen
 To her false daughters in the pool;
 for none
 Regarded; neither seem'd there
 more to say:
 Back rode we to my father's camp,
 and found
 He thrice had sent a herald to the
 gates,
 To learn if Ida yet would cede our
 claim,
 Or by denial flush her babbling wells
 With her own people's life: three
 times he went:
 The first, he blew and blew, but none
 appear'd:
 He batter'd at the doors; none
 came: the next,
 An awful voice within had warn'd
 him thence:
 The third, and those eight daughters
 of the plough
 Came sallying thro' the gates, and
 caught his hair,
 And so belabour'd him on rib and
 cheek
 They made him wild: not less one
 glance he caught
 Thro' open doors of Ida station'd
 there
 Unshaken, clinging to her purpose,
 firm
 Tho' compass'd by two armies and
 the noise
 Of arms; and standing like a stately
 Pine
 Set in a cataract on an island-crag,
 When storm is on the heights, and
 right and left
 Suck'd from the dark heart of the
 long hills roll
 The torrents, dash'd to the vale: and
 yet her will
 Bred will in me to overcome it or fall.

But when I told the king that I
 was pledged
 To fight in tourney for my bride, he
 clash'd
 His iron palms together with a cry;
 Himself would tilt it out among the
 lads:
 But overborne by all his bearded
 lords
 With reasons drawn from age and
 state, perforce
 He yielded, wrath and red, with fierce
 demur:
 And many a bold knight started up
 in heat,
 And swore to combat for my claim
 till death.

All on this side the palace ran the
 field
 Flat to the garden-wall: and like-
 wise here,
 Above the garden's glowing blossom-
 belts,
 A column'd entry shone and marble
 stairs,
 And great bronze valves, emboss'd
 with Tomyris
 And what she did to Cyrus after fight,
 But now fast barr'd: so here upon
 the flat
 All that long morn the lists were
 hammer'd up,
 And all that morn the heralds to and
 fro,
 With message and defiance, went and
 came;
 Last, Ida's answer, in a royal hand,
 But shaken here and there, and
 rolling words
 Oration-like. I kiss'd it and I read.

" O brother, you have known the
 pangs we felt,
 What heats of indignation when we
 heard
 Of those that iron-cramp'd their
 women's feet;
 Of lands in which at the altar the
 poor bride
 Gives her harsh groom for bridal gift
 a scourge;
 Of living hearts that crack within the
 fire

Where smoulder their dead despots
 and of those,—
 Mothers,—that, all prophetic pity
 fling
 Their pretty maids in the running
 flood, and swoops
 The vulture, beak and talon, at the
 heart
 Made for all noble motion : and I saw
 That equal baseness lived in sleeker
 times
 With smoother men : the old leaven
 leaven'd all :
 Millions of throats would bawl for
 civil rights,
 No woman named : therefore I set
 my face
 Against all men, and lived but for
 mine own.
 Far off from men I built a fold for
 them :
 I stored it full of rich memorial :
 I fenced it round with gallant in-
 stitutes,
 And biting laws to scare the beasts of
 prey,
 And prosper'd ; till a rout of saucy
 boys
 Brake on us at our books, and marr'd
 our peace,
 Mask'd like our maids, blustering I
 know not what
 Of insolence and love, some pretext
 held
 Of baby troth, invalid, since my
 will
 Seal'd not the bond—the striplings !
 —for their sport !—
 I tamed my leopards : shall I not tame
 these ?
 Or you ? or I ? for since you think me
 touch'd
 In honour—what, I would not aught
 of false—
 Is not our cause pure ? and whereas
 I know
 Your prowess, Arac, and what
 mother's blood
 You draw from, fight ; you failing, I
 abide
 What end soever : fail you will not.
 Still
 Take not his life : he risk'd it for my
 own ;

His mother lives : yet whatsoe'er you
 do,
 Fight and fight well ; strike and
 strike home. O dear
 Brothers, the woman's Angel guards
 you, you
 The sole men to be mingled with our
 cause,
 The sole men we shall prize in the
 after-time,
 Your very armour hallow'd, and your
 statues
 Rear'd, sung to, when, this gad-fly
 brush'd aside,
 We plant a solid foot into the Time,
 And mould a generation strong to
 move
 With claim on claim from right to
 right, till she
 Whose name is yoked with children's,
 know herself ;
 And Knowledge in our own land
 make her free,
 And, ever following those two crowned
 twins,
 Commerce and conquest, shower the
 fiery grain
 Of freedom broadcast over all that
 orbs
 Between the Northern and the South-
 ern morn."

Then came a postscript dash'd
 across the rest.
 " See that there be no traitors in your
 camp :
 We seem a nest of traitors—none to
 trust
 Since our arms fail'd—this Egypt-
 plague of men !
 Almost our maids were better at their
 homes,
 Than thus man-girdled here : indeed
 I think
 Our chiefest comfort is the little child
 Of one unworthy mother ; which she
 left :
 She shall not have it back : the child
 shall grow
 To prize the authentic mother of her
 mind.
 I took it for an hour in mine own bed
 This morning : there the tender
 orphan hands

Felt at my heart, and seem'd to
 charm from thence
 The wrath I nursed against the world :
 " farewell."

Iceased ; he said : " Stubborn, but she
 may sit
 Upon a king's right hand in thunder-
 storms
 And breed up warriors ! See now,
 tho' yourself
 Be dazzled by the wildfire Love to
 sloughs
 That swallow common sense, the
 spindling king,
 This Gama swamp'd in lazy toler-
 ance.
 When the man wants weight, the
 woman takes it up,
 And topples down the scales ; but
 this is fixt
 As are the roots of earth and base of
 all ;
 Man for the field and woman for the
 hearth :
 Man for the sword and for the needle
 she :
 Man with the head and woman with
 the heart :
 Man to command and woman to
 obey ;
 All else confusion. ' Look you ! the
 gray mare
 Is ill to live with, when her whinny
 shrills
 From tile to scullery, and her small
 Goodman
 Shrinks in his arm-chair while the
 fires of Hell
 Mix with his hearth : but you—she's
 yet a colt—
 Take, break her : strongly groom'd
 and straitly curb'd
 She might not rank with those detest-
 able
 That let the bantling scald at home,
 and brawl
 Their rights or wrongs like potherbs
 in the street.
 They say she's comely ; there's the
 fairer chance :
 I like her none the less for rating at
 her !
 Besides, the woman wed is not as we,

But suffers change of frame. A lusty
 brace
 Of twins may weed her of her folly.
 Boy,
 The bearing and the training of a
 child
 Is woman's wisdom."

Thus the hard old king :
 I took my leave, for it was nearly
 noon :
 I pored upon her letter which I
 held,
 And on the little clause " take not
 his life : "
 I mused on that wild morning in the
 woods,
 And on the " Follow, follow, thou
 shalt win : "
 I thought on all the wrathful king
 had said,
 And how the strange betrothment
 was to end :
 Then I remember'd that burnt
 sorcerer's curse
 That one should fight with shadows
 and should fall ;
 And like a flash the weird affection
 came :
 King, camp and college turn'd to
 hollow shows ;
 I seem'd to move in old memorial
 tilts,
 And doing battle with forgotten
 ghosts,
 To dream myself the shadow of a
 dream :
 And ere I woke it was the point of
 noon,
 The lists were ready. Empanoplied
 and plumed
 We enter'd in, and waited, fifty
 there
 Opposed to fifty, till the trumpet
 blared
 At the barrier like a wild horn in a
 land
 Of echoes, and a moment, and once
 more
 The trumpet, and again : at which
 the storm
 Of galloping hoofs bare on the ridge
 of spears
 And riders front to front, until they
 closed

In conflict with the crash of shivering
 points,
 And thunder. Yet it seem'd a dream,
 I dream'd
 Offighting. On his haunches rose the
 steed,
 And into fiery splinters leapt the
 lance,
 And out of stricken helmets sprang
 the fire.
 Part sat like rocks : part reel'd but
 kept their seats :
 Part roll'd on the earth and rose again
 and drew :
 Part stumbled mixt with floundering
 horses. Down
 From those two bulks at Arac's side,
 and down,
 From Arac's arm, as from a giant's
 flail,
 The large blows rain'd, as here and
 everywhere
 He rode the mellay, lord of the ring-
 ing lists,
 And all the plain,—brand, mace,
 and shaft, and shield—
 Shock'd, like an iron-clanging anvil
 bang'd
 With hammers ; till I thought, can
 this be he
 From Gama's dwarfish loins ? if this
 be so,
 The mother makes us most—and in
 my dream
 I glanced aside, and saw the palace-
 front
 Alive with fluttering scarfs and ladies'
 eyes,
 And highest, among the statues,
 statuelike,
 Between a cymbal'd Miriam and a
 Jael,
 With Psyche's babe, was Ida watch-
 ing us,
 A single band of gold about her
 hair,
 Like a Saint's glory up in heaven :
 but she
 No saint—inexorable—no tender-
 ness—
 Too hard, too cruel : yet she sees me
 fight,
 Yea, let her see me fall ! with that I
 drave

Among the thickest and bore down a
 Prince,
 And Cyril, one. Yea, let me make
 my dream
 All that I would. But that large-
 moulded man,
 His visage all agrin as at a wake,
 Made at me thro' the press, and,
 staggering back
 With stroke on stroke the horse and
 horseman, came
 As comes a pillar of electric cloud,
 Flaying the roofs and sucking up the
 drains,
 And shadowing down the champain
 till it strikes
 On a wood, and takes, and breaks, and
 cracks, and splits,
 And twists the grain with such a roar
 that Earth
 Reels, and the herdsmen cry : for
 everything
 Gave way before him : only Florian,
 he
 That loved me closer than his own
 right eye,
 Thrust in between ; but Arac rode
 him down :
 And Cyril seeing it, push'd against
 the Prince,
 With Psyche's colour round his hel-
 met, tough,
 Strong, supple, sinew-corded, apt at
 arms ;
 But tougher, heavier, stronger, he
 that smote
 And threw him : last I spurr'd ; I
 felt my veins
 Stretch with fierce heat ; a moment
 hand to hand,
 And sword to sword, and horse to
 horse we hung,
 Till I struck out and shouted ; the
 blade glanced ;
 I did but shear a feather, and dream
 and truth
 Flow'd from me ; darkness closed
 me ; and I fell.

Home they brought her warrior dead :
 She nor swoon'd, nor utter'd cry :
 All her maidens, watching, said,
 " She must weep or she will die."

Then they praised him, soft and low,
 Call'd him worthy to be loved,
 Truest friend and noblest foe ;
 Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,
 Lightly to the warrior stept,
 Took the face-cloth from the face ;
 Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,
 Set his child upon her knee—
 Like summer tempest came her tears—
 " Sweet my child, I live for thee."

VI

My dream had never died or lived
 again.

As in some mystic middle state I lay ;
 Seeing I saw not, hearing not I heard :
 Tho', if I saw not, yet they told me
 all
 So often that I speak as having seen.

For so it seem'd, or so they said to
 me,
 That all things grew more tragic and
 more strange ;
 That when our side was vanquish'd
 and my cause
 For ever lost, there went up a great
 cry,
 The Prince is slain. My father heard
 and ran
 In on the lists, and there unlaced my
 casque
 And grovell'd on my body, and after
 him
 Came Psyche, sorrowing for Aglaia.

But high upon the palace Ida stood
 With Psyche's babe in arm : there on
 the roofs
 Like that great dame of Lapidoth she
 sang.

" Our enemies have fall'n, have
 fall'n : the seed,
 The little seed they laugh'd at in the
 dark,
 Has risen and cleft the soil, and grown
 a bulk
 Of spanless girth, that lays on every
 side
 A thousand arms and rushes to the
 Sun.

" Our enemies have fall'n, have
 fall'n : they came ;
 The leaves were wet with women's
 tears : they heard
 A noise of songs they would not
 understand :
 They mark'd it with the red cross to
 the fall,
 And would have strown it, and are
 fall'n themselves.

" Our enemies have fall'n, have
 fall'n : they came,
 The woodmen with their axes : lo
 the tree !
 But we will make it faggots for the
 hearth,
 And shape it plank and beam for roof
 and floor,
 And boats and bridges for the use of
 men.

" Our enemies have fall'n, have
 fall'n : they struck ;
 With their own blows they hurt them-
 selves, nor knew
 There dwelt an iron nature in the
 grain :
 The glittering axe was broken in their
 arms,
 Their arms were shatter'd to the
 shoulder blade.

" Our enemies have fall'n, but this
 shall grow
 A night of Summer from the heat, a
 breadth
 Of Autumn, dropping fruits of power ;
 and roll'd
 With music in the growing breeze of
 Time,
 The tops shall strike from star to star,
 the fangs
 Shall move the stony bases of the
 world.

" And now, O maids, behold our
 sanctuary
 Is violate, our laws broken : fear we
 not
 To break them more in their behoof,
 whose arms
 Champion'd our cause and won it
 with a day

Blanch'd in our annals, and perpetual feast,
 When dames and heroines of the golden year
 Shall strip a hundred hollows bare of Spring,
 To rain an April of ovation round
 Their statues, borne aloft, the three :
 but come,
 We will be liberal, since our rights are won.
 Let them not lie in the tents with coarse mankind,
 Ill nurses ; but descend, and proffer these
 The brethren of our blood and cause, that there
 Lie bruised and maim'd, the tender ministries
 Of female hands and hospitality."

She spoke, and with the babe yet in her arms,
 Descending, burst the great bronze valves, and led
 A hundred maids in train across the Park.
 Some cowl'd, and some bare-headed, on they came,
 Their feet in flowers, her loveliest : by them went
 The enamour'd air sighing, and on their curls
 From the high tree the blossom wavering fell,
 And over them the tremulous isles of light
 Slided, they moving under shade : but Blanche
 At distance follow'd : so they came : anon
 Thro' open field into the lists they wound
 Timorously ; and as the leader of the herd
 That holds a stately fretwork to the Sun,
 And follow'd up by a hundred airy does,
 Steps with a tender foot, light as on air,
 The lovely, lordly creature floated on
 To where her wounded brethren lay ; there stay'd ;

Knelt on one knee,—the child on one,—and prest
 Their hands, and call'd them dear deliverers,
 And happy warriors, and immortal names,
 And said " You shall not lie in the tents but here,
 And nursed by those for whom you fought, and served
 With female hands and hospitality."

Then, whether moved by this, or was it chance,
 She past my way. Up started from my side
 The old lion, glaring with his whelpless eye,
 Silent ; but when she saw me lying stark,
 Dishelm'd and mute, and motionlessly pale,
 Cold ev'n to her, she sigh'd ; and when she saw
 The haggard father's face and reverend beard
 Of grisly twine, all dabbled with the blood
 Of his own son, shudder'd, a twitch of pain
 Tortured her mouth, and o'er her forehead past
 A shadow, and her hue changed, and she said :
 " He saved my life : my brother slew him for it."

No more : at which the king in bitter scorn
 Drew from my neck the painting and the tress
 And held them up : she saw them, and a day
 Rose from the distance on her memory,
 When the good Queen, her mother, shore the tress
 With kisses, ere the days of Lady Blanche :
 And then once more she look'd at my pale face :
 Till understanding all the foolish work
 Of Fancy, and the bitter close of all,
 Her iron will was broken in her mind ;

Her noble heart was molten in her breast ;
 She bow'd, she set the child on the earth ; she laid
 A feeling finger on my brows, and presently
 " O Sire," she said, " he lives : he is not dead :
 O let me have him with my brethren here
 In our own palace : we will tend on him
 Like one of these ; if so, by any means,
 To lighten this great clog of thanks, that make
 Our progress falter to the woman's goal."

She said : but at the happy word " he lives "
 My father stoop'd, re-father'd o'er my wounds.
 So those two foes above my fallen life,
 With brow to brow like night and evening mixt
 Their dark and grey, while Psyche ever stole
 A little nearer, till the babe that by us,
 Half-lapt in glowing gauze and golden brede,
 Lay like a new-fall'n meteor on the grass,
 Uncared for, spied its mother and began
 A blind and babbling laughter, and to dance
 Its body, and reach its fatling innocent arms
 And lazy lingering fingers. She the appeal
 Brook'd not, but clamouring out
 " Mine—mine—not yours,
 It is not yours, but mine : give me the child "
 Ceased all on tremble : piteous was the cry :
 So stood the unhappy mother open-mouth'd,
 And turn'd each face her way : wan was her cheek

With hollow watch, her blooming mantle torn,
 Red grief and mother's hunger in her eye,
 And down dead-heavy sank her curls, and half
 The sacred mother's bosom, panting, burst
 The laces toward her babe ; but she nor cared
 Nor knew it, clamouring on, till Ida heard,
 Look'd up, and rising slowly from me, stood
 Erect and silent, striking with her glance
 The mother, me, the child ; but he that lay
 Beside us, Cyril, batter'd as he was, Trail'd himself up on one knee : then he drew
 Her robe to meet his lips, and down she look'd
 At the arm'd man sideways, pitying, as it seem'd,
 Orself-involved ; but when she learnt his face,
 Remembering his ill-omen'd song, arose
 Once more thro' all her height, and o'er him grew
 Tall as a figure lengthen'd on the sand
 When the tide ebbs in sunshine, and he said :

" O fair and strong and terrible !
 Lioness
 That with your long locks play the Lion's mane !
 But Love and Nature, these are two more terrible
 And stronger. See, your foot is on our necks,
 We vanquish'd, you the Victor of your will.
 What would you more ? give her the child ! remain
 Orb'd in your isolation : he is dead, Or all as dead : henceforth we let you be :
 Win you the hearts of women ; and beware

'Sdeath ! I would sooner fight thrice
o'er than see it."

But Ida spoke not, gazing on the
ground,
And reddening in the furrows of his
chin,
And moved beyond his custom, Gama
said :

" I've heard that there is iron in the
blood,
And I believe it. Not one word ? not
one ?

Whence drew you this steel temper ?
not from me,
Not from your mother now a saint
with saints.

She said you had a heart—I heard her
say it—

' Our Ida has a heart '—just ere she
died—

' But see that some one with autho-
rity
Be near her still ' and I—I sought for
one—

All people said she had authority—
The Lady Blanche : much profit !
Not one word ;

No ! tho' your father sues : see how
you stand

Stiff as Lot's wife, and all the good
knights maim'd,

I trust that there is no one hurt to
death,

For your wild whim : and was it then
for this,

Was it for this we gave our palace up,
Where we withdrew from summer
heats and state,

And had our wine and chess beneath
the planes,

And many a pleasant hour with her
that's gone,

Ere you were born to vex us ? Is it
kind ?

Speak to her I say : is this not she of
whom,

When first she came, all flush'd you
said to me

Now had you got a friend of your own
age,

Now could you share your thought ;
now should men see

Two women faster welded in one love
Than pairs of wedlock ; she you
walk'd with, she

You talk'd with, whole nights long,
up in the tower,

Of sine and arc, spheroid, and azimuth,
And right ascension, Heaven knows
what ; and now

A word, but one, one little kindly word,
Not one to spare her : out upon you,
flint !

You love nor her, nor me, nor any ;
nay,

You shame your mother's judgment
too. Not one ?

You will not ? well—no heart have
you, or such

As fancies like the vermin in a nut
Have fretted all to dust and bitter-
ness."

So said the small king moved beyond
his wont.

But Ida stood nor spoke, drain'd
of her force

By many a varying influence and so
long.

Down thro' her limbs a drooping
languor wept :

Her head a little bent ; and on her
mouth

A doubtful smile dwelt like a clouded
moon

In a still water : then brake out my
sire

Lifting his grim head from my
wounds. " O you,

Woman, whom we thought woman
even now,

And were half fool'd to let you tend
our son,

Because he might have wish'd it—
but we see

The accomplice of your madness un-
forgiven,

And think that you might mix his
draught with death,

When your skies change again : the
rougher hand

Is safer : on to the tents : take up
the Prince."

He rose, and while each ear was
prick'd to attend

A tempest, thro' the cloud that
 dimun'd her broke
 A genial warmth and light once more,
 and shone
 Thro' glittering drops on her sad
 friend.
 "Come hither,
 O Psyche," she cried out, "embrace
 me, come,
 Quick while I melt; make reconcile-
 ment sure
 With one that cannot keep her mind
 an hour:
 Come to the hollow heart they slander
 so!
 Kiss and be friends, like children
 being chid!
 I seem no more: I want forgiveness
 too:
 I should have had to do with none
 but maids,
 That have no links with men. Ah
 false but dear,
 Dear traitor, too much loved, why?
 —why?—Yet see,
 Before these kings we embrace you
 yet once more
 With all forgiveness, all oblivion,
 And trust, not love, you less.
 And now, O Sire,
 Grant me your son, to nurse, to wait
 upon him,
 Like mine own brother. For my
 debt to him,
 This nightmare weight of gratitude,
 I know it;
 Taunt me no more: yourself and
 yours shall have
 Free adit; we will scatter all our
 maids
 Till happier times each to her proper
 hearth:
 What use to keep them here now?
 grant my prayer.
 Help, father, brother, help; speak
 to the king:
 Thaw this male nature to some touch
 of that
 Which kills me with myself, and drags
 me down
 From my fixt height to mob me up
 with all
 The soft and milky rabble of woman-
 kind,
 Poor weakling ev'n as they are."
 Passionate tears
 Follow'd: the king replied not:
 Cyril said:
 "Your brother, Lady,—Florian,—
 ask for him
 Of your great head—for he is wounded
 too—
 That you may tend upon him with
 the prince."
 "Ay so," said Ida with a bitter
 smile,
 "Our laws are broken: let him enter
 too."
 Then Violet, she that sang the mourn-
 ful song,
 And had a cousin tumbled on the
 plain,
 Petition'd too for him. "Ay so,"
 she said,
 I stagger in the stream: I cannot
 keep
 My heart an eddy from the brawling
 hour:
 We break our laws with ease, but let
 it be."
 "Ay so?" said Blanche: "Amazed
 am I to hear
 Your Highness: but your Highness
 breaks with ease
 The law your Highness did not make:
 'twas I.
 I had been wedded wife, I knew man-
 kind,
 And block'd them out; but these
 men came to woo
 Your Highness—verily I think to
 win."
 So she, and turn'd askance a
 wintry eye:
 But Ida with a voice, that like a
 bell
 Toll'd by an earthquake in a tremb-
 ling tower,
 Rang ruin, answer'd full of grief and
 scorn.
 "Fling our doors wide! all, all, not
 one, but all,
 Not only he, but by my mother's
 soul,
 Whatever man lies wounded, friend
 or foe,

Shall enter, if he will. Let our girls
 flit,
 Till the storm die ! but had you stood
 by us,
 The roar that breaks the Pharos from
 his base
 Had left us rock. She fain would
 sting us too,
 But shall not. Pass, and mingle
 with your likes.
 We brook no further insult but are
 gone."

She turn'd ; the very nape of her
 white neck
 Was rosed with indignation : but
 the Prince
 Her brother came ; the king her
 father charm'd
 Her wounded soul with words : nor
 did mine own
 Refuse her proffer, lastly gave his
 hand.

Then us they lifted up, dead
 weights, and bare
 Straight to the doors : to them the
 doors gave way
 Groaning, and in the Vestal entry
 shriek'd
 The virgin marble under iron heels :
 And on they moved and gain'd the
 hall, and there
 Rested : but great the crush was, and
 each base,
 To left and right, of those tall columns
 drown'd
 In silken fluctuation and the swarm
 Of female whisperers : at the further
 end
 Was Ida by the throne, the two great
 cats
 Close by her, like supporters on a
 shield,
 Bow-back'd with fear : but in the
 centre stood
 The common men with rolling eyes ;
 amazed
 They glared upon the women, and
 aghast
 The women stared at these, all silent,

When armour clash'd or jingled,
 while the day,
 Descending, struck athwart the hall,
 and shot
 A flying splendour out of brass and
 steel,
 That o'er the statues leapt from head
 to head,
 Now fired an angry Pallas on the
 helm,
 Now set a wrathful Dian's moon on
 flame,
 And now and then an echo started up,
 And shuddering fled from room to
 room, and died
 Of fright in far apartments.

Then the voice
 Of Ida sounded, issuing ordinance :
 And me they bore up the broad stairs,
 and thro'
 The long-laid galleries past a hundred
 doors
 To one deep chamber shut from
 sound, and due
 To languid limbs and sickness ; left
 me in it ;
 And others elsewhere they laid ;
 and all
 That afternoon a sound arose of
 hoof
 And chariot, many a maiden passing
 home
 Till happier times ; but some were
 left of those
 Held sagest, and the great lords out
 and in,
 From those two hosts that lay beside
 the walls,
 Walk'd at their will, and everything
 was changed.

Ask me no more : the moon may draw
 the sea ;
 The cloud may stoop from heaven and
 take the shape,
 With fold to fold, of mountain or of
 cape ;
 But O too fond, when have I answer'd
 thee ?
 Ask me no more.

Ask me no more : what answer should I
 give ?
 I love not hollow cheek or faded eye :
 Yet, O my friend, I will not have thee
 die !

Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee live ;
 Ask me no more.
 Ask me no more : thy fate and mine are seal'd :
 I strove against the stream and all in vain :
 Let the great river take me to the main :
 No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield ;
 Ask me no more.

 So was their sanctuary violated,
 So their fair college turn'd to hospital ;
 At first with all confusion : by and bye
 Sweet order lived again with other laws :
 A kindlier influence reign'd ; and everywhere
 Low voices with the ministering hand
 Hung round the sick : the maidens came, they talk'd,
 They sang, they read : till she not fair, began
 To gather light, and she that was, became
 Her former beauty treble ; and to and fro
 With books, with flowers, with Angel offices,
 Like creatures native unto gracious act,
 And in their own clear element, they moved.

 But sadness on the soul of Ida fell,
 And hatred of her weakness, blent with shame.
 Old studies fail'd ; seldom she spoke ; but oft
 Clomb to the roofs, and gazed alone for hours
 On that disastrous leaguer, swarms of men
 Darkening her female field : void was her use ;
 And she as one that climbs a peak to gaze
 O'er land and main, and sees a great black cloud

 Drag inward from the deeps, a wall of night,
 Blot out the slope of sea from verge to shore,
 And suck the blinding splendour from the sand,
 And quenching lake by lake and tarn by tarn
 Expunge the world : so fared she gazing there ;
 So blacken'd all her world in secret, blank
 And waste it seem'd and vain ; till down she came,
 And found fair peace once more among the sick.

 And twilight dawn'd ; and morn by morn the lark
 Shot up and shrill'd in flickering gyres, but I
 Lay silent in the muffled cage of life :
 And twilight gloom'd ; and broader-grown the bowers
 Drew the great night into themselves, and Heaven,
 Star after star, arose and fell ; but I,
 Deeper than those weird doubts could reach me, lay
 Quite sunder'd from the moving Universe,
 Nor knew what eye was on me, nor the hand
 That nursed me, more than infants in their sleep.

 But Psyche tended Florian : with her oft,
 Melissa came ; for Blanche had gone, but left
 Her child among us, willing she should keep
 Court-favour : here and there the small bright head,
 A light of healing, glanced about the couch,
 Or thro' the parted silks the tender face
 Peep'd, shining in upon the wounded man
 With blush and smile, a medicine in themselves
 To wile the length from languorous hours, and draw

The sting from pain ; nor seem'd it strange that soon
 He rose up whole, and those fair charities
 Join'd at her side ; nor stranger seem'd that hearts
 So gentle, so employ'd, should close in love,
 Than when two dewdrops on the petal shake
 To the same sweet air, and tremble deeper down,
 And slip at once all-fragrant into one.
 Less prosperously the second suit obtain'd
 At first with Psyche. Not tho' Blanche had sworn
 That after that dark night among the fields,
 She needs must wed him for her own good name ;
 Not tho' he built upon the babe restored ;
 Nor tho' she liked him, yielded she, but fear'd
 To incense the Head once more ; till on a day
 When Cyril pleaded, Ida came behind
 Seen but of Psyche : on her foot she hung
 A moment, and she heard, at which her face
 A little flush'd, and she past on ; but each
 Assumed from thence a half-consent involved
 In stillness, plighted troth, and were at peace.
 Nor only these : Love in the sacred halls
 Held carnival at will, and flying struck
 With showers of random sweet on maid and man.
 Nor did her father cease to press my claim,
 Nor did mine own now reconciled ; nor yet
 Did those twin brothers, risen again and whole ;
 Nor Arac, satiate with his victory.
 But I lay still, and with me oft she sat :
 Then came a change ; for sometimes I would catch
 Her hand in wild delirium, gripe it hard,
 And fling it like a viper off, and shriek
 " You are not Ida ; " clasp it once again,
 And call her Ida, tho' I knew her not,
 And call her sweet, as if in irony,
 And call her hard and cold which seem'd a truth :
 And still she fear'd that I should lose my mind,
 And often she believed that I should die :
 Till out of long frustration of her care,
 And pensive tendance in the all-weary noons,
 And watches in the dead, the dark, when clocks
 Throbb'd thunder thro' the palace floors, or call'd
 On flying Time from all their silver tongues—
 And out of memories of her kindlier days,
 And sidelong glances at my father's grief,
 And at the happy lovers heart in heart—
 And out of hauntings of my spoken love,
 And lonely listenings to my mutter'd dream,
 And often feeling of the helpless hands,
 And wordless broodings on the wasted cheek—
 From all a closer interest flourish'd up,
 Tenderness touch by touch, and last, to these,
 Love, like an Alpine harebell hung with tears
 By some cold morning glacier ; frail at first
 And feeble, all unconscious of itself,
 But such as gather'd colour day by day.
 Last I woke sane, but well-nigh close to death
 For weakness : it was evening : silent light

Slept on the painted walls, wherein
 were wrought
 Two grand designs ; for on one side
 arose
 The women up in wild revolt, and
 storm'd
 At the Oppian law. Titanic shapes,
 they cramm'd
 The forum, and half-crush'd among
 the rest
 A dwarf-like Cato cower'd. On the
 other side
 Hortensia spoke against the tax ;
 behind,
 A train of dames : by axe and eagle
 sat,
 With all their foreheads drawn in
 Roman scowls,
 And half the wolf's-milk curdled in
 their veins,
 The fierce triumvirs ; and before
 them paused
 Hortensia, pleading : angry was her
 face.

I saw the forms : I knew not where
 I was :
 They did but look like hollow shows ;
 nor more
 Sweet Ida : palm to palm she sat :
 the dew
 Dwelt in her eyes, and softer all her
 shape
 And rounder seem'd : I moved : I
 sigh'd : a touch
 Came round my wrist, and tears upon
 my hand :
 Then all for languor and self-pity ran
 Mine down my face, and with what
 life I had,
 And like a flower that cannot all
 unfold,
 So drench'd it is with tempest, to the
 sun,
 Yet, as it may, turns toward him, I
 on her
 Fixt my faint eyes, and utter'd
 whisperingly :

" If you be, what I think you, some
 sweet dream,
 I would but ask you to fulfil yourself :
 But if you be that Ida whom I knew,

I ask you nothing : only, if a dream,
 Sweet dream, be perfect. I shall die
 to-night.

Stoop down and seem to kiss me ere
 I die."

I could no more, but lay like one
 in trance,
 That hears his burial talk'd of by his
 friends,
 And cannot speak, nor move, nor
 make one sign,
 But lies and dreads his doom. She
 turn'd ; she paused ;
 She stoop'd ; and out of languor leapt
 a cry ;
 Leapt fiery Passion from the brinks
 of death ;
 And I believed that in the living world
 My spirit closed with Ida's at the lips ;
 Till back I fell, and from mine arms
 she rose
 Glowing all over noble shame ; and
 all

Her falsè self slipt from her like a
 robe,
 And left her woman, lovelier in her
 mood
 Than in her mould that other, when
 she came
 From barren deeps to conquer all
 with love ;
 And down the streaming crystal
 dropt ; and she
 Far-fleeted by the purple island-sides,
 Naked, a double light in air and wave,
 To meet her Graces, where they
 deck'd her out
 For worship without end ; nor end
 of mine,
 Stateliest, for thee ! but mute she
 glided forth,
 Nor glanced behind her, and I sank
 and slept,
 Fill'd thro' and thro' with Love, a
 happy sleep.

Deep in the night I woke : she,
 near me, held
 A volume of the Poets of her land :
 There to herself, all in low tones, she
 read.

"Now sleeps the crimson petal,
 now the white ;
 Nor waves the cypress in the palace
 walk ;
 Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry
 font .
 The fire-fly wakens : waken thou
 with me .
 Now droops the milkwhite peacock
 like a ghost,
 And like a ghost she glimmers on to
 me .
 Now lies the Earth all Danaë to the
 stars,
 And all thy heart lies open unto me .
 Now slides the silent meteor on,
 and leaves
 A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in
 me .
 Now folds the lily all her sweetness
 up,
 And slips into the bosom of the lake :
 So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and
 slip
 Into my bosom and be lost in me ."
 I heard her turn the page ; she
 found a small
 Sweet Idyl, and once more, as low,
 she read :
 "Come down, O maid, from yonder
 mountain height :
 What pleasure lives in height (the
 shepherd sang)
 In height and cold, the splendour of
 the hills ?
 But cease to move so near the
 Heavens, and cease
 To glide a sunbeam by the blasted
 Pine,
 To sit a star upon the sparkling spire ;
 And come, for Love is of the valley,
 come,
 For Love is of the valley, come thou
 down
 And find him ; by the happy thresh-
 old, he,
 Or hand in hand with Plenty in the
 maize,
 Or red with spirted purple of the vats,
 Or foxlike in the vine ; nor cares to
 walk
 With Death and Morning on the silver
 horns,
 Nor wilt thou snare him in the white
 ravine,
 Nor find him dropt upon the firths of
 ice,
 That huddling slant in furrow-cloven
 falls
 To roll the torrent out of dusky doors :
 But follow ; let the torrent dance
 thee down
 To find him in the valley ; let the
 wild
 Lean-headed Eagles yelp alone, and
 leave
 The monstrous ledges there to slope,
 and spill
 Their thousand wreaths of dangling
 water-smoke,
 That like a broken purpose waste in
 air :
 So waste not thou ; but come ; for
 all the vales
 Await thee ; azure pillars of the
 hearth
 Arise to thee ; the children call, and
 I
 Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every
 sound,
 Swæter thy voice, but every sound is
 sweet ;
 Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro'
 the lawn,
 The moan of doves in immemorial
 elms,
 And murmuring of innumerable
 bees ."
 So she low-toned ; while with
 shut eyes I lay
 Listening ; then look'd . Pale was
 the perfect face ;
 The bosom with long sighs labour'd ;
 and meek
 Seem'd the full lips, and mild the
 luminous eyes,
 And the voice trembled and the hand .
 She said
 Brokenly, that she knew it, she had
 fail'd
 In sweet humility ; had fail'd in all ;

That all her labour was but as a block
 Left in the quarry ; but she still were loth,
 She still were loth to yield herself to one,
 That wholly scorn'd to help their equal rights
 Against the sons of men, and barbarous laws.
 She pray'd me not to judge their cause from her
 That wrong'd it, sought far less for truth than power
 In knowledge : something wild within her breast,
 A greater than all knowledge, beat her down.
 And she had nursed me there from week to week :
 Much had she learnt in little time.
 In part
 It was ill counsel had misled the girl
 To vex true hearts : yet was she but a girl—
 " Ah fool, and made myself a Queen of farce !
 When comes another such ? never, I think,
 Till the Sun drop dead from the signs."

Her voice

Choked, and her forehead sank upon her hands,
 And her great heart thro' all the faultful Past
 Went sorrowing in a pause I dared not break ;
 Till notice of a change in the dark world
 Was lispt about the acacias, and a bird,
 That early woke to feed her little ones,
 Sent from a dewy breast a cry for light :
 She moved, and at her feet the volume fell.

" Blame not thyself too much," I said, " nor blame
 Too much the sons of men and barbarous laws ;
 These were the rough ways of the world till now.

Henceforth thou hast a helper, me, that know
 The woman's cause is man's : they rise or sink
 Together, dwarf'd or godlike, bond or free :
 For she that out of Lethe scales with man
 The shining steps of Nature, shares with man
 His nights, his days, moves with him to one goal,
 Stays all the fair young planet in her hands—
 If she be small, slight-natured, miserable,
 How shall men grow ? but work no more alone !
 Our place is much : as far as in us lies
 We two will serve them both in aiding her—
 Will clear away the parasitic forms
 That seem to keep her up but drag her down—
 Will leave her space to burgeon out of all
 Within her—let her make herself her own
 To give or keep, to live and learn and be
 All that not harms distinctive womanhood.
 For woman is not undevelop't man,
 But diverse : could we make her as the man,
 Sweet Love were slain : his dearest bond is this,
 Not like to like, but like in difference.
 Yet in the long years liker must they grow ;
 The man be more of woman, she of man ;
 He gain in sweetness and in moral height,
 . or lose the wrestling thews that throws the world ;
 The mental breadth, nor fail in childward care,
 Nor lose the childlike in the larger mind ;
 Till at the last she set herself to man,
 Like perfect music unto noble words ;
 And so these twain, upon the skirts of Time,

Sit side by side, full-summ'd in all their powers,	Not learned, save in gracious house- hold ways,
Dispensing harvest, sowing the To-be,	Not perfect, nay, but full of tender wants,
Self-reverent each and reverencing each,	No Angel, but a dearer being, all dipt
Distinct in individualities, But like each other ev'n as those who love.	In Angel instincts, breathing Para- dise,
Then comes the statelier Eden back to men :	Interpreter between the Gods and men,
Then reign the world's great bridals, chaste and calm :	Who look'd all native to her place, and yet
Then springs the crowning race of humankind.	On tiptoe seem'd to touch upon a sphere
May these things be ! "	Too gross to tread, and all male minds perforce
Sighing she spoke " I fear They will not. "	Sway'd to her from their orbits as they moved,
" Dear, but let us type them now In our own lives, and this proud watchword rest	And girdled her with music. Happy he
Of equal ; seeing either sex alone Is half itself, and in true marriage lies	With such a mother ! faith in woman- kind
Nor equal, nor unequal : each ful- fils	Beats with his blood, and trust in all things high
Defect in each, and always thought in thought,	Comes easy to him, and tho' he trip and fall
Purpose in purpose, will in will, they grow,	He shall not blind his soul with clay. "
The single pure and perfect animal, The two-cell'd heart beating, with one full stroke,	" But I, "
Life. "	Said Ida, tremulously, " so all un- like—
And again sighing she spoke : " A dream	It seems you love to cheat yourself with words :
That once was mine ! what woman taught you this ? "	This mother is your model. I have heard
	Of your strange doubts : they well might be : I seem
	A mockery to my own self. Never, Prince ;
	You cannot love me. "
" Alone " I said " from earlier than I know,	" Nay but thee " I said
Immersed in rich foreshadowings of the world,	" From yearlong poring on thy pic- tured eyes,
I loved the woman : he, that doth not, lives	Ere seen I loved, and loved thee seen, and saw
A drowning life, besotted in sweet self,	Thee woman thro' the crust of iron moods
Or pines in sad experience worse than death,	That mask'd thee from men's rever- ence up, and forced
Or keeps his wing'd affections clipt with crime :	Sweet love on pranks of saucy boy- hood : now,
Yet was there one thro' whom I loved her, one	Giv'n back to life, to life indeed, thro' thee,
	Indeed I love : the new day comes, the light

Dearer for night, as dearer thou for faults
 Lived over: lift thine eyes; my doubts are dead,
 My haunting sense of hollow shows: the change,
 This truthful change in thee has kill'd it. Dear,
 Look up, and let thy nature strike on mine,
 Like yonder morning on the blind half-world;
 Approach and fear not; breathe upon my brows;
 In that fine air I tremble, all the past
 Melts mist-like into this bright hour, and this
 Is morn to more, and all the rich to-come
 Reels, as the golden Autumn woodland reels
 Athwart the smoke of burning weeds. Forgive me,
 I waste my heart in signs: let be. My bride,
 My wife, my life. O we will walk this world,
 Yoked in all exercise of noble end,
 And so thro' those dark gates across the wild
 That no man knows. Indeed I love thee: come,
 Yield thyself up: my hopes and thine are one:
 Accomplish thou my manhood and thyself;
 Lay thy sweet hands in mine and trust to me."

Yet how to bind the scattered scheme of seven
 Together in one sheaf? What style could suit?
 The men required that I should give throughout
 The sort of mock-heroic gigantesque, With which we banter'd little Lilia first:
 The women—and perhaps they felt their power,
 For something in the ballads which they sang,
 From their silent influence as they sat,
 Had ever seem'd to wrestle with burlesque,
 And drove us, last, to quite a solemn close—
 They hated banter, wish'd for something real,
 A gallant fight, a noble princess—why
 Not make her true-heroic—true-sublime?
 Or all, they said, as earnest as the close?
 Which yet with such a framework scarce could be.
 Then rose a little feud betwixt the two,
 Betwixt the mockers and the realists:
 And I, betwixt them both, to please them both,
 And yet to give the story as it rose,
 I moved as in a strange diagonal,
 And maybe neither pleased myself nor them.

CONCLUSION

So closed our tale, of which I give you all
 The random scheme as wildly as it rose:
 The words are mostly mine; for when we ceased
 There came a minute's pause, and Walter said,
 "I wish she had not yielded!" then to me,
 "What, if you drest it up poetically!"
 So pray'd the men, the women: I gave assent:

But Lilia pleased me, for she took no part
 In our dispute: the sequel of the tale
 Had touch'd her; and she sat, she pluck'd the grass,
 he flung it from her, thinking: last, she fixt
 A showery glance upon her aunt, and said,
 'You—tell us what we are' who might have told,
 For she was cramm'd with theories out of books,
 But that there rose a shout: the gates were closed

At sunset, and the crowd were swarming now,
 To take their leave, about the garden rails.

So I and some went out to these :
 we climb'd
 The slope to Vivian-place, and turning saw
 The happy valleys, half in light, and half
 Far-shadowing from the west, a land of peace ;
 Gray halls alone among their massive groves ;
 Trim hamlets ; here and there a rustic tower
 Half lost in belts of hop and breadths of wheat ;
 The shimmering glimpses of a stream ; the seas ;
 A red sail, or a white ; and far beyond,
 Imagined more than seen, the skirts of France.

" Look there, a garden ! " said my college friend,
 The Tory member's elder son " and there !
 God bless the narrow sea which keeps her off,
 And keeps our Britain, whole within herself,
 A nation yet, the rulers and the ruled—
 Some sense of duty, something of a faith,
 Some reverence for the laws ourselves have made,
 Some patient force to change them when we will,
 Some civic manhood firm against the crowd—
 But yonder, whiff ! there comes a sudden heat,
 The gravest citizen seems to lose his head,
 The king is scared, the soldier will not fight,
 The little boys begin to shoot and stab,
 A kingdom topples over with a shriek
 Like an old woman, and down rolls the world

In mock heroics stranger than our own ;
 Revolts, republics, revolutions, most
 No graver than a schoolboys' barring out ;
 Too comic for the solemn things they are,
 Too solemn for the comic touches in them,
 Like our wild Princess with as wise a dream
 As some of theirs—God bless the narrow seas !
 I wish they were a whole Atlantic broad."

" Have patience," I replied, " ourselves are full
 Of social wrong ; and maybe wildest dreams
 Are but the needful preludes of the truth :
 For me, the genial day, the happy crowd,
 The sport half-science, fill me with a faith,
 This fine old world of ours is but a child
 Yet in the go-cart. Patience ! Give it time
 To learn its limbs : there is a hand that guides."

In such discourse we gain'd the garden rails,
 And there we saw Sir Walter where he stood,
 Before a tower of crimson holly-oaks,
 Among six boys, head under head, and look'd
 No little lily-handed Baronet he, great broad-shoulder'd genial Englishman,
 A lord of fat prize-oxen and of sheep,
 A raiser of huge melons and of pine,
 A patron of some thirty charities,
 A pamphleteer on guano and on grain,
 A quarter-sessions chairman, abler none ;
 Fair-hair'd and redder than a windy morn ;
 Now shaking hands with him, now him, of those

That stood the nearest—now ad dress'd to speech—	But we went back to the Abbey, and sat on,
Who spoke few words and pithy, such as closed	So much the gathering darkness charm'd: we sat
Welcome, farewell, and welcome for the year	But spoke not, rapt in nameless reverie,
To follow: a shout rose again, and made	Perchance upon the future man: the walls
The long line of the approaching rookery swerve	Blacken'd about us, bats wheel'd, and owls whoop'd,
From the elms, and shook the branches of the deer	And gradually the powers of the night,
From slope to slope thro' distant ferns, and rang	That range above the region of the wind,
Beyond the bourn of sunset; O, a shout	Deepening the courts of twilight broke them up
More joyful than the city-roar that hails	Thro' all the silent spaces of the worlds,
Premier or king! Why should not these great Sirs	Beyond all thought into the Heaven of Heavens.
Give up their parks some dozen times a year	Last little Lilia, rising quietly, Disrobed the glimmering statue of Sir Ralph
To let the people breathe? So thrice they cried,	From those rich silks, and home well- pleased we went.
I likewise, and in groups they stream'd away.	

IN MEMORIAM

A. H. H.

OBIIT MDCCCXXXIII

STRONG Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen thy
face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove ;

Thine are these orbs of light and
shade ;
Thou madest Life in man and
brute ;
Thou madest Death ; and lo, thy
foot
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust :
Thou madest man, he knows not
why ;
He thinks he was not made to die ;
And thou hast made him : thou art
just.

Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood, thou :
Our wills are ours, we know not how ;
Our wills are ours, to make them
thine.

Our little systems have their day ;
They have their day and cease
to be :
They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than
they.

We have but faith : we cannot
know ;
For knowledge is of things we see ;
And yet we trust it comes from
thee,
A beam in darkness : let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to
more,
But more of reverence in us dwell ;
That mind and soul, according
well,
May make one music as before,
But vaster. We are fools and slight ;
We mock thee when we do not
fear :
But help thy foolish ones to bear ;
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy
light.

Forgive what seem'd my sin in me ;
What seem'd my worth since I
began ;
For merit lives from man to man,
And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,
Thy creature, whom I found so
fair.
I trust he lives in thee, and there
I find him worthier to be loved.

Forgive these wild and wandering
cries,
Confusions of a wasted youth ;
Forgive them where they fail in
truth,
And in thy wisdom make me wise.

I HELD it truth, with him who sings
To one clear harp in divers tones,
That men may rise on stepping-
stones
Of their dead selves to higher things.

1849.

But who shall so forecast the years
And find in loss a gain to match ?
Or reach a hand thro' time to catch
The far-off interest of tears ?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be
drown'd,

Let darkness keep her raven gloss :
Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,
To dance with death, to beat the
ground,

Than that the victor Hours should
scorn

The long result of love, and boast,
" Behold the man that loved and
lost,

But all he was is overworn."

OLD Yew, which graspest at the
stones

That name the under-lying dead,
Thy fibres net the dreamless head,
Thy roots are wrapt about the
bones.

The seasons bring the flower again,
And bring the firstling to the flock ;
And in the dusk of thee, the clock
Beats out the little lives of men.

O not for thee the glow, the bloom,
Who changest not in any gale,
Nor branding summer suns avail
To touch thy thousand years of
gloom :

And gazing on thee, sullen tree,
Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,
I seem to fail from out my blood
And grow incorporate into thee.

O sorrow, cruel fellowship,
O Priestess in the vaults of Death,
O sweet and bitter in a breath,
What whispers from thy lying lip ?

" The stars," she whispers, " blindly
run ;

A web is wov'n across the sky ;
From out waste places comes a cry,
And murmurs from the dying sun :

" And all the phantom, Nature,
stands—

With all the music in her tone,
A hollow echo of my own,—
A hollow form with empty hands."

And shall I take a thing so blind,
Embrace her as my natural good ;
Or crush her, like a vice of blood,
Upon the threshold of the mind ?

IV

To Sleep I give my powers away ;
My will is bondsman to the dark ;
I sit within a helmless bark,
And with my heart I muse and say :

O heart, how fares it with thee now,
That thou should'st fail from thy
desire,

Who scarcely darest to inquire,
" What is it makes me beat so low ? "

Something it is which thou hast lost,
Some pleasure from thine early
years.

Break, thou deep vase of chilling
tears,
That grief hath shaken into frost !

Such clouds of nameless trouble cross
All night below the darken'd eyes ;
With morning wakes the will, and
cries,

" Thou shalt not be the fool of loss."

I SOMETIMES hold it half a sin
To put in words the grief I feel ;
For words, like Nature, half re-
veal

And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,
A use in measured language lies ;
The sad mechanic exercise,
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

- In words, like weeds, I'll wrap me o'er,
Like coarsest clothes against the cold;
But that large grief which these enfold
Is given in outline and no more.
- ONE writes, that "Other friends remain,"
That "Loss is common to the race"—
And common is the commonplace,
And vacant chaff well meant for grain.
- That loss is common would not make
My own less bitter, rather more:
Too common! Never morning wore
To evening, but some heart did break.
- O father, wheresoe'er thou be,
Who pledgest now thy gallant son;
A shot, ere half thy draught be done,
Hath still'd the life that beat from thee.
- O mother, praying God will save
Thy sailor,—while thy head is bow'd,
His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud
Drops in his vast and wandering grave.
- Ye know no more than I who wrought
At that last hour to please him well;
Who mused on all I had to tell,
And something written, something thought;
- Expecting still his advent home;
And ever met him on his way
With wishes, thinking, here to-day,
Or here to-morrow will he come.
- O somewhere, meek unconscious dove,
That sittest ranging golden hair;
And glad to find thyself so fair,
Poor child, that waitest for thy love!
- For now her father's chimney glows
In expectation of a guest;
And thinking "this will please him best,"
She takes a riband or a rose;
- For he will see them on to-night;
And with the thought her colour burns;
And, having left the glass, she turns
Once more to set a ringlet right;
- And, even when she turn'd, the curse
Had fallen, and her future Lord
Was drown'd in passing thro' the ford,
Or kill'd in falling from his horse.
- O what to her shall be the end?
And what to me remains of good?
To her, perpetual maidenhood,
And unto me no second friend.
- DARK house, by which once more I stand
Here in the long unlovely street,
Doors, where my heart was used to beat
So quickly, waiting for a hand,
- A hand that can be clasp'd no more—
Behold me, for I cannot sleep,
And like a guilty thing I creep
At earliest morning to the door.
- He is not here; but far away
The noise of life begins again,
And ghastly thro' the drizzling rain
On the bald street breaks the blank day.
- VIII
- A HAPPY lover who has come
To look on her that loves him well,
Who 'lights and rings the gateway bell,
And learns her gone and far from home;

He saddens, all the magic light
 Dies off at once from bower and
 hall,
 And all the place is dark, and all
 The chambers emptied of delight :

So find I every pleasant spot
 In which we two were wont to meet,
 The field, the chamber and the
 street,
 For all is dark where thou art not.

Yet as that other, wandering there
 In those deserted walks, may find
 A flower beat with rain and wind,
 Which once she foster'd up with care ;

So seems it in my deep regret,
 O my forsaken heart, with thee
 And this poor flower of poesy
 Which little cared for fades not yet.

But since it pleased a vanish'd eye,
 I go to plant it on his tomb,
 That if it can it there may bloom,
 Or dying, there at least may die.

IX

FAIR ship, that from the Italian
 shore
 Sailed the placid ocean-plains
 With my lost Arthur's loved re-
 mains,
 Spread thy full wings, and waft him
 o'er.

So draw him home to those that
 mourn
 In vain ; a favourable speed
 Ruffle thy mirror'd mast, and lead
 Thro' prosperous floods his holy urn.

All night no ruder air perplex
 Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor,
 bright
 As our pure love, thro' early light
 Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.

Sphere all your lights around, above ;
 Sleep, gentle heavens, before the
 prow ;
 Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps
 now,
 My friend, the brother of my love ;

My Arthur, whom I shall not see
 Till all my widow'd race be run ;
 Dear as the mother to the son,
 More than my brothers are to me.

I HEAR the noise about thy keel ;
 I hear the bell struck in the night ;
 I see the cabin-window bright ;
 I see the sailor at the wheel.

Thou bringest the sailor to his wife,
 And travell'd men from foreign
 lands ;
 And letters unto trembling hands ;
 And, thy dark freight, a vanish'd
 life.

So bring him : we have idle dreams :
 This look of quiet flatters thus
 Our home-bred fancies : O to us,
 The fools of habit, sweeter seems

To rest beneath the clover sod,
 That takes the sunshine and the
 rains,
 Or where the kneeling hamlet
 drains

The chalice of the grapes of God ;
 Than if with thee the roaring wells
 Should gulf him fathom-deep in
 brine ;
 And hands so often clasp'd in
 mine,
 Should toss with tangle and with
 shells.

XI

CALM is the morn without a sound,
 Calm as to suit a calmer grief,
 And only thro' the faded leaf
 The chestnut pattering to the ground :

Calm and deep peace on this high
 wold,
 And on these dews that drench the
 furze,
 And all the silvery gossamers
 That twinkle into green and gold :

Calm and still light on yon great plain
That sweeps with all its autumn
 bowers,
And crowded farms and lessening
 towers,

To mingle with the bounding main :

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,
These leaves that redden to the
 fall ;

And in my heart, if calm at all,
If any calm, a calm despair :

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,
And waves that sway themselves
 in rest,
And dead calm in that noble breast
Which heaves but with the heaving
 deep.

Lo, as a dove when up she springs
To bear thro' Heaven a tale of woe,
Some dolorous message knit below
The wild pulsation of her wings ;

Like her I go ; I cannot stay ;
I leave this mortal ark behind,
A weight of nerves without a mind,
And leave the cliffs, and haste away

O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large,
And reach the glow of southern
 skies,

And see the sails at distancerise,
And linger weeping on the marge,

And saying ; " Comes he thus, my
 friend ?

Is this the end of all my care ? "
And circle moaning in the air :
" Is this the end ? Is this the end ? "

And forward dart again, and play
About the prow, and back return
To where the body sits, and learn,
That I have been an hour away.

TEARS of the widower, when he sees
A late-lost form that sleep reveals,
And moves his doubtful arms, and
 feels

Her place is empty, fall like these ;

Which weep a loss for ever new,
A void where heart on heart
 reposed ;

And, where warm hands have
 prest and clos'd,

Silence, till I be silent too.

Which weep the comrade of my choice,
An awful thought, a life removed,
The human-hearted man I loved,
A Spirit, not a breathing voice.

Come Time, and teach me, many
 years,

I do not suffer in a dream ;
For now so strange do these things
 seem,

Mine eyes have leisure for their tears ;

My fancies time to rise on wing,
And glance about the approaching
 sails,

As tho' they brought but mer-
 chants' bales,
And not the burthen that they bring,

If one should bring me this report,
That thou hadst touch'd the land
 to-day,

And I went down unto the quay,
And found thee lying in the port ;

And standing, muffled round with
 woe,

Should see thy passengers in rank
Come stepping lightly down the
 plank,

And beckoning unto those they know ;

And if along with these should come
The man I held as half-divine ;

Should strike a sudden hand in
 mine,

And ask a thousand things of home ;

And I should tell him all my pain,
And how my life had droop'd of
 late,

And he should sorrow o'er my
 state

And marvel what possess'd my brain ;

And I perceived no touch of change,
 No hint of death in all his frame,
 But found him all in all the same,
 I should not feel it to be strange.

That holds the shadow of a lark
 Hung in the shadow of a heaven ?
 Or has the shock, so harshly given,
 Confused me like the unhappy bark

TO-NIGHT the winds begin to rise
 And roar from yonder dropping
 day :

The last red leaf is whirl'd away,
 The rooks are blown about the skies ;

The forest crack'd, the waters curl'd,
 The cattle huddled on the lea ;
 And wildly dash'd on tower and
 tree

The sunbeam strikes along the world :

And but for fancies, which aver
 That all thy motions gently pass
 Athwart a plane of molten glass,
 I scarce could brook the strain and
 stir.

That makes the barren branches
 loud ;
 And but for fear it is not so,
 The wild unrest that lives in woe
 Would dote and pore on yonder
 cloud

That rises upward always higher,
 And onward drags a labouring
 breast,

And topples round the dreary west,
 A looming bastion fringed with fire.

WHAT words are these have fall'n
 from me ?
 Can calm despair and wild unrest
 Be tenants of a single breast,
 Or sorrow such a changeling be ?

Or doth she only seem to take
 The touch of change in calm or
 storm ;

But knows no more of transient
 form
 In her deep self, than some dead
 lake

That strikes by night a craggy shelf,
 And staggers blindly ere she sink ?
 And stunn'd me from my power to
 think

And all my knowledge of myself ;

And made me that delirious man
 Whose fancy fuses old and new,
 And flashes into false and true,
 And mingles all without a plan ?

THOU comest, much wept for : such
 a breeze
 Compell'd thy canvas, and my
 prayer
 Was as the whisper of an air
 To breathe thee over lonely seas.

For I in spirit saw thee move
 Thro' circles of the bounding sky,
 Week after week . the days go by :
 Come quick, thou bringest all I love.

Henceforth, wherever thou may'st
 roam,
 My blessing, like a line of light,
 Is on the waters day and night,
 And like a beacon guards thee home.

So may whatever tempest mars
 Mid-ocean, spare thee, sacred bark ;
 And balmy drops in summer dark
 Slide from the bosom of the stars.

So kind an office hath been done,
 Such precious relics brought by
 thee ;
 The dust of him I shall not see
 Till all my widow'd race be run.

'Tis well ; 'tis something ; we may
 stand

Where he in English earth is laid,
 And from his ashes may be made
 The violet of his native land.

'Tis little ; but it looks in truth
 As if the quiet bones were blest
 Among familiar names to rest
 And in the places of his youth.

Come then, pure hands, and bear the
 head
 That sleeps or wears the mask of
 sleep,
 And come, whatever loves to
 weep,
 And hear the ritual of the dead.

Ah yet, ev'n yet, if this might be,
 I, falling on his faithful heart,
 Would 'breathing thro' his lips
 impart
 The life that almost dies in me ;

That dies not, but endures with pain,
 And slowly forms the firmer mind,
 Treasuring the look it cannot find,
 The words that are not heard again.

Who speak their feeling as it is,
 And weep the fullness from the
 mind :
 " It will be hard " they say " to
 find
 Another service such as this."

My lighter moods are like to these,
 That out of words a comfort win ;
 But there are other griefs within,
 And tears that at their fountain
 freeze ;

For by the hearth the children sit
 Cold in that atmosphere of Death,
 And scarce endure to draw the
 breath,
 Or like to noiseless phantoms flit :

But open converse is there none,
 So much the vital spirits sink
 To see the vacant chair, and think,
 " How good ! how kind ! and he is
 gone."

XIX

THE Danube to the Severn gave
 The darken'd heart that beat no
 more ;
 They laid him by the pleasant
 shore,
 And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills ;
 The salt sea-water passes by,
 And hushes half the babbling Wye,
 And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hush'd nor moved along,
 And hush'd my deepest grief of all,
 When fill'd with tears that cannot
 fall,
 I brim with sorrow drowning song.

The tide flows down, the wave again
 Is vocal in its wooded walls ;
 My deeper anguish also falls,
 And I can speak a little then.

I SING to him that rests below,
 And, since the grasses round me
 wave,
 I take the grasses of the grave,
 And make them pipes whereon to
 blow.

The traveller hears me now and then,
 And sometimes harshly will he
 speak ;
 " This fellow would make weakness
 weak,
 And melt the waxen hearts of men."

Another answers, " Let him be,
 He loves to make parade of pain,
 That with his piping he may gain
 The praise that comes to constancy."

XX

THE lesser griefs that may be said,
 That breathe a thousand tender
 vows,
 Are but as servants in a house
 Where lies the master newly dead ;

A third is wroth, " Is this an hour
 For private sorrow's barren song,
 When more and more the people
 throng
 The chairs and thrones of civil power ?

A time to sicken and to swoon,
 When Science reaches forth her
 arms
 To feel from world to world, and
 charms
 Her secret from the latest moon ? "

Behold, ye speak an idle thing :
 Ye never knew the sacred dust :
 I do but sing because I must,
 And pipe but as the linnets sing :

And one is glad ; her note is gay,
 For now her little ones have
 ranged ;
 And one is sad ; her note is
 changed,
 Because her brood is stol'n away.

XXII

THE path by which we twain did go,
 Which led by tracts that pleased
 us well,
 Thro' four sweet years arose and
 fell,
 From flower to flower, from snow to
 snow :

And we with singing cheer'd the
 way,
 And crown'd with all the season
 lent,
 From April on to April went,
 And glad at heart from May to May :

But where the path we walk'd began
 To slant the fifth autumnal slope,
 As we descended following Hope,
 There sat the Shadow fear'd of man ;

Who broke our fair companionship,
 And spread his mantle dark and
 cold,
 And wrapt thee formless in the
 fold,
 And dull'd the murmur on thy lip,

And bore thee where I could not see
 Nor follow, tho' I walk in haste,
 And think, that somewhere in the
 waste
 The Shadow sits and waits for me.

XXIII

Now, sometimes in my sorrow shut,
 Or breaking into song by fits,
 Alone, alone, to where he sits,
 The Shadow cloak'd from head to
 foot,

Who keeps the keys of all the creeds,
 I wander, often falling lame,
 And looking back to whence I
 came,

Or on to where the pathway leads ;

And crying, " how changed from
 where it ran
 Thro' lands where not a leaf was
 dumb ;

But all the lavish hills would hum
 The murmur of a happy Pan :

When each by turns was guide to each,
 And Fancy light from Fancy
 caught,

And Thought leapt out to wed with
 Thought,
 Ere Thought could wed itself with
 Speech ;

And all we met was fair and good,
 And all was good that Time could
 bring,

And all the secret of the Spring
 Moved in the chambers of the blood ;

And many an old philosophy
 On Argive heights divinely sang,
 And round us all the thicket rang
 To many a flute of Arcady."

XXIV

AND was the day of my delight
 As pure and perfect as I say ?
 The very source and fount of Day
 Is dash'd with wandering isles of
 night.

If all was good and fair we met,
 This earth had been the Paradise
 It never look'd to human eyes
 Since Adam left his garden yet.

And is it that the haze of grief
Makes former gladness loom so
great?

The lowness of the present state,
That sets the past in this relief?

Or that the past will always win
A glory from its being far;
And orb into the perfect star
We saw not, when we moved therein?

I know that this was Life,—the track
Whereon with equal feet we fared;
And then, as now, the day prepared
The daily burden for the back.

But this it was that made me move
As light as carrier-birds in air;
I loved the weight I had to bear,
Because it needed help of Love:

Nor could I weary, heart or limb,
When mighty Love would cleave
in twain

The lading of a single pain,
And part it, giving half to him.

xxvi

STILL onward winds the dreary way;
I with it; for I long to prove
No lapse of moons can canker Love,
Whatever fickle tongues may say.

And if that eye which watches guilt
And goodness, and hath power to see

Within the green the moulder'd
tree,
And towers fall'n as soon as
built—

Oh, if indeed that eye foresee
Or see (in Him is no before)
In more of life true life no more,
And Love the indifference to be,

Then might I find, ere yet the morn
Breaks hither over Indian seas,
That Shadow waiting with the keys,
To shroud me from my proper scorn.

xxvii

I ENVY not in any moods
The captive void of noble rage,
The linnet born within the cage,
That never knew the summer woods:

I envy not the beast that takes
His license in the field of time,
Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,
To whom a conscience never wakes;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,
The heart that never plighted
troth
But stagnates in the weeds of sloth;
Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall;
I feel it, when I sorrow most;
'Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.

xxviii

THE time draws near the birth of
Christ:

The moon is hid; the night is still;
The Christmas bells from hill to
hill

Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,
From far and near, on mead and
moor,

Swell out and fail, as if a door
Were shut between me and the
sound:

Each voice four changes on the wind,
That now dilate, and now decrease,
Peace and goodwill, goodwill and
peace,
Peace and goodwill, to all mankind.

This year I slept and woke with pain,
I almost wish'd no more to wake,
And that my hold on life would
break
Before I heard those bells again:

But they my troubled spirit rule, Then echo-like our voices rang ;
 For they controll'd me when a We sung, tho' every eye was dim,
 boy ; A merry song we sang with him
 They bring me sorrow touch'd Last year : impetuously we sang :
 with joy,
 The merry merry bells of Yule. We ceased : a gentler feeling crept
 Upon us : surely rest is meet :
 " They rest," we said, " their sleep
 is sweet,"
 And silence follow'd, and we wept.
 With such compelling cause to grieve
 As daily vexes household peace,
 And chains regret to his decease,
 How dare we keep our Christmas-
 eve ;
 Our voices took a higher range ;
 Once more we sang : " They do
 not die
 Nor lose their mortal sympathy,
 Nor change to us, although they
 change ;
 Which brings no more a welcome
 guest
 To enrich the threshold of the night
 With shower'd largess of delight,
 In dance and song and game and jest.
 Yet go, and while the holly boughs
 Entwine the cold baptismal font,
 Make one wreath more for Use
 and Wont,
 Pierces the keen seraphic flame
 From orb to orb, from veil to veil."
 That guard the portals of the house ; Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn,
 Draw forth the cheerful day from
 night :
 Old sisters of a day gone by, O Father, touch the east, and
 light
 Gray nurses, loving nothing new ; The light that shone when Hope was
 born,
 Why should they miss their yearly
 due
 Before their time ? They too will
 die.

XXX

With trembling fingers did we weave
 The holly round the Christmas
 hearth ;
 A rainy cloud possess'd the earth,
 And sadly fell our Christmas-eve.
 When Lazarus left his charnel-cave,
 And home to Mary's house return'd,
 Was this demanded—if he yearn'd
 To hear her weeping by his grave ?
 At our old pastimes in the hall
 " Where wert thou, brother, those
 four days ? "
 We gambol'd, making vain pre-
 tence
 There lives no record of reply,
 Of gladness, with an awful sense
 Which telling what it is to die
 Of one mute Shadow watching all. Had surely added praise to praise.
 We paused : the winds were in the
 beech ;
 From every house the neighbours
 met,
 We heard them sweep the winter
 land ;
 The streets were fill'd with joyful
 sound,
 And in a circle hand-in-hand A solemn gladness even crown'd
 Sat silent, looking each at each. The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ !
 The rest remaineth unreveal'd ;
 He told it not ; or something
 seal'd
 The lips of that Evangelist.

See thou, that countest reason ripe
 In holding by the law within,
 Thou fail not in a world of sin,
 And ev'n for want of such a type.

XXXII

HER eyes are homes of silent prayer,
 Nor other thought her mind admits
 But, he was dead, and there he
 sits,
 And he that brought him back is
 there.

Then one deep love doth supersede
 All other, when her ardent gaze
 Roves from the living brother's
 face,
 And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,
 Borne down by gladness so com-
 plete,
 She bows, she bathes the Saviour's
 feet
 With costly spikenard and with
 tears.

Thrice blest whose lives are faithful
 prayers,
 Whose loves in higher love endure ;
 What souls possess themselves
 so pure,
 Or is there blessedness like theirs ?

XXXIII

O THOU that after toil and storm
 Mayst seem to have reach'd a
 purer air,
 Whose faith has centre everywhere,
 Nor cares to fix itself to form,

Leave thou thy sister when she prays,
 Her early Heaven, her happy
 views ;
 Nor thou with shadow'd hint con-
 fuse
 A life that leads melodious days.

HER faith thro' form is pure as thine,
 Her hands are quicker unto good :
 Oh, sacred be the flesh and blood
 To which she links a truth divine !

My own dim life should teach me this,
 That life shall live for evermore,
 Else earth is darkness at the core,
 And dust and ashes all that is ;

This round of green, this orb of flame,
 Fantastic beauty ; such as lurks
 In some wild Poet, when he works
 Without a conscience or an aim.

What then were God to such as I ?
 'Twere hardly worth my while to
 choose
 Of things all mortal, or to use
 A little patience ere I die ;

'Twere best at once to sink to peace,
 Like birds the charming serpent
 draws,
 To drop head-foremost in the jaws
 Of vacant darkness and to cease.

YET if some voice that man could
 trust
 Should murmur from the narrow
 house,
 " The cheeks drop in ; the body
 bows ;
 Man dies : nor is there hope in dust : "

Might I not say ? " yet even here,
 But for one hour, O Love, I strive
 To keep so sweet a thing alive : "
 But I should turn mine ears and hear

The moanings of the homeless sea,
 The sound of streams that swift or
 slow
 Draw down Æonian hills, and sow
 The dust of continents to be ;

And Love would answer with a sigh,
 " The sound of that forgetful shore
 Will change my sweetness more and
 more,
 Half-dead to know that I shall die."

O me, what profits it to put
 An idle case? If Death were seen
 At first as Death, Love had not
 been,
 Or been in narrowest working shut,
 Mere fellowship of sluggish moods,
 Or in his coarsest Satyr-shape
 Had bruised the herb and crush'd
 the grape,
 And bask'd and batten'd in the
 woods.

xxxvi

Tho' truths in manhood darkly join,
 Deep-seated in our mystic frame,
 We yield all blessing to the name
 Of Him that made them current
 coin;

For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers,
 Where truth in closest words shall
 fail,

When truth embodied in a tale
 Shall enter in at lowly doors.

And so the Word had breath, and
 wrought

With human hands the creed of
 creeds

In loveliness of perfect deeds,
 More strong than all poetic thought;

Which he may read that binds the
 sheaf,

Or builds the house, or digs the
 grave,

And those wild eyes that watch the
 wave

In roarings round the coral reef.

URANIA speaks with darken'd brow:
 "Thou pratest here where thou
 art least;

This faith has many a purer priest,
 And many an abler voice than thou.

Go down beside thy native rill,
 On thy Parnassus set thy feet,
 And hear thy laurel whisper sweet
 About the ledges of the hill."

And my Melpomene replies,
 A touch of shame upon her cheek:
 "I am not worthy ev'n to speak
 Of thy prevailing mysteries;

For I am but an earthly Muse,
 And owning but a little art
 To lull with song an aching heart,
 And render human love his dues;

But brooding on the dear one dead,
 And all he said of things divine,
 (And dear to me as sacred wine
 To dying lips is all he said),

I murmur'd, as I came along,
 Of comfort clasp'd in truth re-
 veal'd;

And loiter'd in the master's field,
 And darken'd sanctities with song."

xxxviii

With weary steps I loiter on,
 Tho' always under alter'd skies
 The purple from the distance dies,
 My prospect and horizon gone.

No joy the blowing season gives,
 The herald melodies of spring,
 But in the songs I love to sing
 A doubtful gleam of solace lives.

If any care for what is here
 Survive in spirits render'd free,
 Then are these songs I sing of thee
 Not all ungrateful to thine ear.

COULD we forget the widow'd hour
 And look on Spirits breathed away,
 As on a maiden in the day
 When first she wears her orange-
 flower!

When crown'd with blessing she doth
 rise
 To take her latest leave of home,
 And hopes and light regrets that
 come
 Make April of her tender eyes;

- And doubtful joys the father move,
And tears are on the mother's face,
As parting with a long embrace
She enters other realms of love ;
- Her office there to rear, to teach,
Becoming as is meet and fit
A link among the days, to knit
The generations each with each ;
- And, doubtless, unto thee is given
A life that bears immortal fruit
In such great offices as suit
The full-grown energies of heaven.
- Ay me, the difference I discern !
How often shall her old fireside
Be cheer'd with tidings of the bride,
How often she herself return,
- And tell them all they would have
told,
And bring her babe, and make her
boast,
Till even those that miss'd her
most,
Shall count new things as dear as
old :
- But thou and I have shaken hands,
Till growing winters lay me low ;
My paths are in the fields I know
And thine in undiscover'd lands.
- Thy spirit ere our fatal loss
Did ever rise from high to higher ;
As mounts the heavenward altar-
fire,
As flies the lighter thro' the gross.
- But thou art turn'd to something
strange,
And I have lost the links that
bound
Thy changes ; here upon the
ground,
No more partaker of thy change.
- Deep folly ! yet that this could be—
That I could wing my will with
might
To leap the grades of life and light,
And flash at once, my friend, to thee :
- For tho' my nature rarely yields
To that vague fear implied in death ;
Nor shudders at the gulfs beneath,
The howlings from forgotten fields ;
- Yet oft when sundown skirts the
moor
An inner trouble I behold,
A spectral doubt which makes me
cold,
That I shall be thy mate no more,
- Tho' following with an upward mind
The wonders that have come to
thee,
Thro' all the secular to-be,
But evermore a life behind.
- I vex my heart with fancies dim :
He still outstript me in the race ;
It was but unity of place
That made me dream I rank'd with
him.
- And so may Place retain us still,
And he the much-beloved again,
A lord of large experience, train
To riper growth the mind and will :
- And what delights can equal those
That stir the spirit's inner deeps,
When one that loves but knows
not, reaps
A truth from one that loves and
knows ?
- If Sleep and Death be truly one,
And every spirit's folded bloom
Thro' all its intervital gloom
In some long trance should slumber
on ;
- Unconscious of the sliding hour,
Bare of the body, might it last,
And silent traces of the past
Be all the colour of the flower :

So then were nothing lost to man ;
 So that still garden of the souls
 In many a figured leaf enrolls
 The total world since life began ;

And love will last as pure and whole
 As when he loved me here in Time,
 And at the spiritual prime
 Rewaken with the dawning soul.

How fares it with the happy dead ?
 For here the man is more and
 more ;

But he forgets the days before
 God shut the doorways of his head.

The days have vanish'd, tone and
 tint,

And yet perhaps the hoarding
 sense

Gives out at times (he knows not
 whence)

A little flash, a mystic hint ;

And in the long harmonious years
 (If Death so taste Lethean springs)
 May some dim touch of earthly
 things

Surprise thee ranging with thy peers.

If such a dreamy touch should fall,
 O turn thee round, resolve the
 doubt ;

My guardian angel will speak out
 In that high place, and tell thee all.

XLIV

THE baby new to earth and sky,
 What time his tender palm is prest
 Against the circle of the breast,
 Has never thought that "this is I :"

But as he grows he gathers much,
 And learns the use of "I," and
 "me,"

And finds "I am not what I see,
 And other than the things I touch."

So rounds he to a separate mind
 From whence clear memory may
 begin,
 As thro' the frame that binds him
 in

His isolation grows defined.

This use may lie in blood and breath,
 Which else were fruitless of their
 due,

Had man to learn himself anew
 Beyond the second birth of Death.

XLV

WE ranging down this lower track,
 The path we came by, thorn and
 flower,

Is shadow'd by the growing hour,
 Lest life should fail in looking back.

So be it : there no shade can last
 In that deep dawn behind the
 tomb,

But clear from marge to marge
 shall bloom

The eternal landscape of the past ;

A lifelong tract of time reveal'd ;
 The fruitful hours of still increase ;
 Days order'd in a wealthy peace,
 And those five years its richest field.

O Love, thy province were not large,
 A bounded field, nor stretching far ;
 Look also, Love, a brooding star,
 A rosy warmth from marge to marge.

XLVI

THAT each, who seems a separate
 whole,

Should move his rounds, and
 fusing all

The skirts of self again, should fall
 Remerging in the general Soul,

Is faith as vague as all unsweet :
 Eternal form shall still divide
 The eternal soul from all beside ;
 And I shall know him when we meet :

And we shall sit at endless feast,
 Enjoying each the other's good :
 What vaster dream can hit the
 mood
 Of Love on earth? He seeks at
 least

The lightest wave of thought shall
 lisp,
 The fancy's tenderest eddy breathe,
 The slightest air of song shall
 breathe
 To make the sullen surface crisp.

Upon the last and sharpest height,
 Before the spirits fade away,
 Some landing-place, to clasp and
 say,
 "Farewell! We lose ourselves in
 light."

And look thy look, and go thy way,
 But blame not thou the winds that
 make
 The seeming-wanton ripple break,
 The tender-pencil'd shadow play.

XLVII

If these brief lays, of Sorrow born,
 Were taken to be such as closed
 Grave doubts and answers here
 proposed,
 Then these were such as men might
 scorn :

Beneath all fancied hopes and fears
 Ay me, the sorrow deepens down,
 Whose muffled motions blindly
 drown
 The bases of my life in tears.

Her care is not to part and prove ;
 She takes, when harsher moods
 remit,

Be near me when my light is low,
 When the blood creeps, and the
 nerves prick

What slender shade of doubt may
 flit,
 And makes it vassal unto love :

And tingle ; and the heart is sick,
 And all the wheels of Being slow.

And hence, indeed, she sports with
 words,
 But better serves a wholesome
 law,

And Time, a maniac scattering
 dust,
 And Life, a Fury slinging flame.

And holds it sin and shame to draw
 The deepest measure from the chords :

Be near me when my faith is dry,
 And men the flies of latter spring,
 That lay their eggs, and sting and
 sing,

Nor dare she trust a larger lay,
 But rather loosens from the lip
 Short swallow-flights of song, that
 dip
 Their wings in tears, and skim away.

And weave their petty cells and die.

Be near me when I fade away,
 To point the term of human strife,
 And on the low dark verge of life
 The twilight of eternal day.

XLVIII

FROM art, from nature, from the
 schools,
 Let random influences glance,
 Like light in many a shiver'd lance
 That breaks about the dappled pools :

Do we indeed desire the dead
 Should still be near us at our side?
 Is there no baseness we would
 hide?
 No inner vileness that we dread?

Shall he for whose applause I strove,
 I had such reverence for his blame,
 See with clear eye some hidden
 shame
 And I be lessen'd in his love ?
 I wrong the grave with fears untrue :
 Shall love be blamed for want of
 faith ?
 There must be wisdom with great
 Death
 The dead shall look me thro' and
 thro'.

Be near us when we climb or fall :
 Ye watch, like God, the rolling
 hours
 With larger other eyes than ours,
 To make allowance for us all.

And dare we to this fancy give,
 That had the wild oat not been
 sown,
 The soil, left barren, scarce had
 grown
 The grain by which a man may live ?
 Oh, if we held the doctrine sound
 For life outliving heats of youth,
 Yet who would preach it as a
 truth
 To those that eddy round and round ?

Hold thou the good : define it well :
 For fear divine Philosophy
 Should push beyond her mark, and
 be
 Procress to the Lords of Hell.

LIII

I CANNOT love thee as I ought,
 For love reflects the thing beloved ;
 My words are only words, and
 moved
 Upon the topmost froth of thought.

"Yet blame not thou thy plaintive
 song,"
 The Spirit of true love replied ;
 "Thou canst not move me from
 thy side,
 Nor human frailty do me wrong.

"What keeps a spirit wholly true
 To that ideal which he bears ?
 What record ? not the sinless years
 That breathed beneath the Syrian
 blue :

"So fret not, like an idle girl,
 That life is dash'd with flecks of
 sin.
 Abide : thy wealth is gather'd in,
 When Time hath sunder'd shell from
 pearl."

How many a father have I seen,
 A sober man, among his boys,
 Whose youth was full of foolish
 noise,
 Who wears his manhood hale and
 green :

Oh yet we trust that somehow good
 Will be the final goal of ill,
 To pangs of nature, sins of will,
 Defects of doubt, and taints of
 blood ;

That nothing walks with aimless feet ;
 That not one life shall be destroy'd,
 Or cast as rubbish to the void,
 When God hath made the pile
 complete ;

That not a worm is cloven in vain ;
 That not a moth with vain desire
 Is shrivel'd in a fruitless fire,
 Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything ;
 I can but trust that good shall fall
 At last—far off—at last, to all,
 And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream : but what am I ?
 An infant crying in the night :
 An infant crying for the light :
 And with no language but a cry.

The wish, that of the living whole
 No life may fail beyond the grave,
 Derives it not from what we have
 The likest God within the soul ?

Are God and Nature then at strife,
That Nature lends such evil
dreams ?

So careful of the type she seems,
So careless of the single life ;

That I, considering everywhere
Her secret meaning in her deeds,
And finding that of fifty seeds
She often brings but one to bear,

I falter where I firmly trod,
And falling with my weight of
cares

Upon the great world's altar-
stairs

That slope thro' darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and
grope,

And gather dust and chaff, and call
To what I feel is Lord of all,
And faintly trust the larger hope.

"So careful of the type ? " but no.
From scarped cliff and quarried
stone

She cries " a thousand types are
gone :

I care for nothing, all shall go.

"Thou makest thine appeal to me :
I bring to life, I bring to death :
The spirit does but mean the
breath :

I know no more." And he, shall
he,

Man, her last work, who seem'd so
fair,

Such splendid purpose in his eyes,
Who roll'd the psalm to wintry
skies,

Who built him fanes of fruitless
prayer,

Who trusted God was love indeed

And love Creation's final law—
Tho' Nature, red in tooth and claw
With ravine, shriek'd against his
creed—

Who loved, who suffer'd countless
ills,

Who battled for the True, the Just,
Be blown about the desert dust,
Or seal'd within the iron hills ?

No more ? A monster then, a dream,
A discord. Dragons of the prime,
That tare each other in their
slime,

Were mellow music match'd with
him.

O life as futile, then, as frail !

O for thy voice to soothe and bless !

What hope of answer, or redress ?
Behind the veil, behind the veil.

PEACE ; come away : the song of
woe

Is after all an earthly song :

Peace ; come away : we do him
wrong

To sing so wildly : let us go.

Come ; let us go : your cheeks are
pale ;

But half my life I leave behind :
Methinks my friend is richly
shrined ;

But I shall pass ; my work will fail.

Yet in these ears, till hearing dies,

One set slow bell will seem to toll

The passing of the sweetest soul
That ever look'd with human eyes.

I hear it now, and o'er and o'er,

Eternal greetings to the dead ;

And " Ave, Ave, Ave," said,

" Adieu, adieu " for evermore.

IN those sad words I took farewell :

Like echoes in sepulchral halls,

As drop by drop the water falls

In vaults and catacombs, they fell ;

And, falling, idly broke the peace
Of hearts that beat from day to
day,
Half-conscious of their dying clay,
And those cold crypts where they
shall cease.

The high Muse answer'd : " Where-
fore grieve
Thy brethren with a fruitless tear ?
Abide a little longer here,
And thou shalt take a nobler leave."

LVIII

O SORROW, wilt thou live with me
No casual mistress, but a wife,
My bosom-friend and half of life ;
As I confess it needs must be ;

O Sorrow, wilt thou rule my blood,
Be sometimes lovely like a bride,
And put thy harsher moods aside,
If thou wilt have me wise and good.

My centred passion cannot move,
Nor will it lessen from to-day ;
But I'll have leave at times to play
As with the creature of my love ;

And set thee forth, for thou art mine,
With so much hope for years to
come,
That, howsoe'er I know thee, some
Could hardly tell what name were
thine.

He past ; a soul of nobler tone :
My spirit loved and loves him yet,
Like some poor girl whose heart is
set

On one whose rank exceeds her own.

He mixing with his proper sphere,
She finds the baseness of her lot,
Half jealous of she knows not what,
And envying all that meet him there.

The little village looks forlorn ;
She sighs amid her narrow days,
Moving about the household ways,
In that dark house where she was
born.

The foolish neighbours come and
go,

And tease her till the day draws
by :

At night she weeps, " How vain
am I !

How should he love a thing so low ? "

LX

IF, in thy second state sublime,
Thy ransom'd reason change re-
plies

With all the circle of the wise,
The perfect flower of human time ;

And if thou cast thine eyes below,
How dimly character'd and slight,
How dwarf'd a growth of cold and
night,

How blanch'd with darkness must I
grow !

Yet turn thee to the doubtful shore,
Where thy first form was made a
man ;

I love thee, Spirit, and love, nor
can
The soul of Shakspeare love thee
more.

LXI

THO' if an eye that's downward cast
Could make thee somewhat blench
or fail,

Then be my love an idle tale,
And fading legend of the past ;

And thou, as one that once declined,
When he was little more than boy,
On some unworthy heart with joy,
But lives to wed an equal mind ;

And breathes a novel world, the while
His other passion wholly dies,
Or in the light of deeper eyes
Is matter for a flying smile.

YET pity for a horse o'er-driven,
And love in which my hound has
part,
Can hang no weight upon my heart
In its assumptions up to heaven ;

And I am so much more than these
As thou, perchance, art more than
I,

And yet I spare them sympathy
And I would set their pains at ease.

So may'st thou watch me where I
weep,

As, unto vaster motions bound,
The circuits of thine orbit round
A higher height, a deeper deep.

LXIII

Dost thou look back on what hath
been,

As some divinely gifted man,
Whose life in low estate began
And on a simple village green ;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,
And grasps the skirts of happy
chance,

And breasts the blows of circum-
stance,
And grapples with his evil star ;

Who makes by force his merit known
And lives to clutch the golden keys,
To mould a mighty state's decrees,
And shape the whisper of the throne ;

And moving up from high to higher,
Becomes on Fortune's crowning
slope

The pillar of a people's hope,
The centre of a world's desire ;

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,
When all his active powers are still,
A distant dearness in the hill,
A secret sweetness in the stream, .

The limit of his narrower fate,
While yet beside its vocal springs
He play'd at counsellors and kings,
With one that was his earliest mate ;

Who ploughs with pain his native
lea

And reaps the labour of his hands,
Or in the furrow musing stands ;

" Does my old friend remember me ? "

LXIV

SWEET soul, do with me as thou
wilt ;

I lull a fancy trouble-tost
With " Love's too precious to be
lost,

A little grain shall not be spilt."

And in that solace can I sing,
Till out of painful phases wrought
There flutters up a happy thought,
Self-balanced on a lightsome wing :

Since we deserved the name of friends,
And thine effect so lives in me,
A part of mine may live in thee,
And move thee on to noble ends.

You thought my heart too far
diseased ;

You wonder when my fancies play
To find me gay among the gay,
Like one with any trifle pleased.

The shade by which my life was crost,
Which makes a desert in the mind,
Has made me kindly with my kind,
And like to him whose sight is lost ;

Whose feet are guided thro' the land,
Whose jest among his friends is free,
Who takes the children on his knee,
And winds their curls about his hand :

He plays with threads, he beats his
chair

For pastime, dreaming of the sky ;
His inner day can never die,
His night of loss is always there.

WHEN on my bed the moonlight
falls,

I know that in thy place of rest
By that broad water of the west,
There comes a glory on the walls :

Thy marble bright in dark appears,
As slowly steals a silver flame
Along the letters of thy name,
And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away ;
 From off my bed the moonlight
 dies ;
 And closing eaves of wearied eyes
 I sleep till dusk is dipt in gray :

And then I know the mist is drawn
 A lucid veil from coast to coast,
 And in the dark church like a
 ghost
 Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn.

WHEN in the down I sink my head,
 Sleep, Death's twin-brother, times
 my breath ;
 Sleep, Death's twin-brother, knows
 not Death,
 Nor can I dream of thee as dead :

I walk as ere I walk'd forlorn,
 When all our path was fresh with
 dew,
 And all the bugle breezes blew
 Reveillé to the breaking morn.

But what is this ? I turn about,
 I find a trouble in thine eye,
 Which makes me sad I know not
 why,
 Nor can my dream resolve the doubt :

But ere the lark hath left the lea
 I wake, and I discern the truth ;
 It is the trouble of my youth
 That foolish sleep transfers to thee.

LXVIII

I DREAM'D there would be Spring
 no more,
 That Nature's ancient power was
 lost ;
 The streets were black with smoke
 and frost,
 They chatter'd trifles at the door :

I wander'd from the noisy town,
 I found a wood with thorny
 boughs :
 I took the thorns to bind my brows,
 I wore them like a civic crown :

I met with scoffs, I met with scorns
 From youth and babe and hoary
 hairs :
 They call'd me in the public squares
 The fool that wears a crown of thorns :

They call'd me fool, they call'd me
 child :
 I found an angel of the night ;
 The voice was low, the look was
 bright ;
 He look'd up on my crown and smiled :

He reach'd the glory of a hand,
 That seem'd to touch it into leaf :
 The voice was not the voice of grief,
 The words were hard to understand.

LXIX

I CANNOT see the features right,
 When on the gloom I strive to
 paint
 The face I know ; the hues are
 faint

And mix with hollow masks of night ;
 Cloud-towers by ghostly masons
 wrought,
 A gulf that ever shuts and gapes,
 A hand that points, and palled
 shapes

In shadowy thoroughfares of thought ;
 And crowds that stream from yawn-
 ing doors,
 And shoals of pucker'd faces
 drive ;
 Dark bulks that tumble half alive,
 And lazy lengths on boundless shores :

Till all at once beyond the will
 I hear a wizard music roll,
 And thro' a lattice on the soul
 Looks thy fair face and makes it
 still.

SLEEP, kinsman thou to death and
 trance
 And madness, thou hast forged at
 last
 A night-long Present of the Past
 In which we went thro' summer
 France.

Hadst thou such credit with the soul?
 Then bring an opiate trebly
 strong,
 Drug down the blindfold sense of
 wrong
 That so my pleasure may be whole ;
 While now we talk as once we talk'd
 Of men and minds, the dust of
 change,
 The days that grow to something
 strange,
 In walking as of old we walk'd
 Beside the river's wooded reach,
 The fortress, and the mountain
 ridge,
 The cataract flashing from the
 bridge,
 The breaker breaking on the beach.

LXXI

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,
 And howlest, issuing out of night,
 With blasts that blow the poplar
 white,
 And lash with storm the streaming
 pane ?

Day, when my crown'd estate begun
 To pine in that reverse of doom,
 Which sicken'd every living bloom,
 And blurr'd the splendour of the
 sun ;

Who usherest in the dolorous hour
 With thy quick tears that make
 the rose

Pull sideways, and the daisy close
 Her crimson fringes to the shower ;

Who might'st have heaved a wind-
 less flame

Up the deep East, or, whispering,
 play'd

A chequer-work of beam and
 shade

Along the hills, yet look'd the same,

As wan, as chill, as wild as now ;
 Day, mark'd as with some hideous
 crime,

When the dark hand struck down
 thro' time,

And cancell'd nature's best : but
 thou,

Lift as thou may'st thy burthen'd
 brows

Thro' clouds that drench the
 morning star,

And whirl the ungarn'd sheaf
 afar,

And sow the sky with flying boughs,

And up thy vault with roaring sound
 Climb thy thick noon, disastrous
 day ;

Touch thy dull goal of joyless gray,
 And hide thy shame beneath the
 ground.

LXXII

So many worlds, so much to do,
 So little done, such things to be,
 How know I what had need of
 thee,

For thou wert strong as thou wert
 true ?

The fame is quench'd that I foresaw,
 The head hath miss'd an earthly
 wreath :

I curse not nature, no, nor death ;
 For nothing is that errs from law.

We pass ; the path that each man
 trod

Is dim, or will be dim, with weeds :
 What fame is left for human deeds
 In endless age ? It rests with God.

A hollow wraith of dying fame,
 Fade wholly, while the soul exults,
 And self-infolds the large results
 Of force that would have forged a
 name.

LXXIII

As sometimes in a dead man's face,
 To those that watch it more and
 more,

A likeness, hardly seen before,
 Comes out—to some one of his race :

So, dearest, now thy brows are cold,
 I see thee what thou art, and know
 Thy likeness to the wise below,
 Thy kindred with the great of old.

But there is more than I can see,
And what I see I leave unsaid,
Nor speak it, knowing Death has
made
His darkness beautiful with thee

LXXIV

I LEAVE thy praises unexpress'd
In verse that brings myself relief,
And by the measure of my grief
I leave thy greatness to be guess'd ;

What practice howso'er expert
In fitting aptest words to things,
Or voice the richest-toned that
sings,
Hath power to give thee as thou wert ?

I care not in these fading days
To raise a cry that lasts not long,
And round thee with the breeze of
song
To stir a little dust of praise.

Thy leaf has perish'd in the green,
And, while we breathe beneath the
sun,
The world which credits what is
done
Is cold to all that might have been.

So here shall silence guard thy fame ;
But somewhere, out of human view,
Whate'er thy hands are set to do
Is wrought with tumult of acclaim.

TAKE wings of fancy, and ascend,
And in a moment set thy face
Where all the starry heavens of
space
Are sharpen'd to a needle's end ;

Take wings of foresight ; lighten thro'
The secular abyss to come,
And lo, thy deepest lays are dumb
Before the mouldering of a yew ;

And if the matin songs, that woke
The darkness of our planet, last,
Thine own shall wither in the vast,
Ere half the lifetime of an oak,

Ere these have clothed their branchy
bowers
With fifty Mays, thy songs are
vain ;
And what are they when these
remain
The ruin'd shells of hollow towers ?

LXXVI

WHAT hope is here for modern rhyme
To him, who turns a musing eye
On songs, and deeds, and lives,
that lie
Foreshorten'd in the tract of time ?
These mortal lullabies of pain
May bind a book, may line a box,
May serve to curl a maiden's locks ;
Or when a thousand moons shall
wane

A man upon a stall may find,
And, passing, turn the page that
tells
A grief, then changed to something
else,
Sung by a long-forgotten mind.
But what of that ? My darken'd
ways
Shall ring with music all the same ;
To breathe my loss is more than
fame,
To utter love more sweet than praise.

LXXVII

AGAIN at Christmas did we weave
The holly round the Christmas
hearth ;
The silent snow possess'd the earth,
And calmly fell our Christmas-eve :

The yule-clog sparkled keen with
frost,
No wing of wind the region swept,
But over all things brooding slept
The quiet sense of something lost.

As in the winters left behind,
Again our ancient games had place,
The mimic picture's breathing
grace,
And dance and song and hoodman-
blind.

Who show'd a token of distress ? Then fancy shapes, as fancy can,
 No single tear, no mark of pain : The grief my loss in him had
 O sorrow, then can sorrow wane ? wrought,
 O grief, can grief be changed to less ? A grief as deep as life or thought,
 But stay'd in peace with God and

O last regret, regret can die !

No—mixt with all this mystic
 frame

Her deep relations are the same,
 But with long use her tears are dry.

I make a picture in the brain ;
 I hear the sentence that he speaks ;
 He bears the burthen of the weeks,
 But turns his burthen into gain.

LXXVIII

"More than my brothers are to me"—
 Let this not vex thee, noble heart !
 I know thee of what force thou art
 To hold the costliest love in fee.

His credit thus shall set me free ;
 And, influence-rich to soothe and
 save,
 Unused example from the grave
 Reach out dead hands to comfort me.

LXXX

But thou and I are one in kind,
 As moulded like in nature's mint ;
 And hill and wood and field did
 print
 The same sweet forms in either mind.

COULD I have said while he was here
 " My love shall now no further
 range ;
 There cannot come a mellow
 change,
 For now is love mature in ear."

For us the same cold streamlet curl'd
 Thro' all his eddying coves ; the
 same
 All winds that roam the twilight
 came
 In whispers of the beauteous world.

Love, then, had hope of richer store :
 What end is here to my complaint ?
 This haunting whisper makes me
 faint,
 " More years had made me love thee
 more."

At one dear knee we proffer'd vows,
 One lesson from one book we
 learn'd,
 Ere childhood's flaxen ringlet
 turn'd
 To black and brown on kindred brows.

But Death returns an answer sweet :
 " My sudden frost was sudden gain,
 And gave all ripeness to the grain,
 It might have drawn from after-
 heat."

LXXXI

And so my wealth resembles thine,
 But he was rich where I was poor,
 And he supplied my want the more
 As his likeness fitted mine.

I WAGE not any feud with Death
 For changes wrought on form and
 face,
 No lower life that earth's embrace
 May breed with him, can fright my
 faith.

If any vague desire should rise,
 That holy Death ere Arthur died
 Had moved me kindly from his
 side,
 And dropt the dust on tearless eyes ;

Eternal process moving on,
 From state to state the spirit walks ;
 And these are but the shatter'd
 stalks,
 Or ruin'd chrysalis of one.

Nor blame I Death, because he bare
The use of virtue out of earth :
I know transplanted human worth
Will bloom to profit, otherwhere.

For this alone on Death I wreak
The wrath that garners in my heart ;
He put our lives so far apart
We cannot hear each other speak.

LXXXII

Dir down upon the northern shore,
O sweet new-year delaying long ;
Thou doest expectant nature
wrong ;
Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded
noons,
Thy sweetness from its proper
place ?
Can trouble live with April days,
Or sadness in the summer moons ?

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove
spire,
The little speedwell's darling blue,
Deep tulips dash'd with fiery dew,
Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou, new-year, delaying long,
Delayest the sorrow in my blood,
That longs to burst a frozen bud,
And flood a fresher throat with song.

LXXXIII

When I contemplate all alone
The life that had been thine below,
And fix my thoughts on all the
glow
To which thy crescent would have
grown ;

I see thee sitting crown'd with good,
A central warmth diffusing bliss
In glance and smile, and clasp and
kiss,
On all the branches of thy blood ;

Thy blood, my friend, and partly
mine ;

For now the day was drawing on,
When thou should'st link thy life
with one

Of mine own house, and boys of
thine

Had babbled " Uncle " on my knee ;
But that remorseless iron hour
Made cypress of her orange flower
Despair of Hope, and earth of thee.

I seem to meet their least desire,
To clap their cheeks, to call them
mine.

I see their unborn faces shine
Beside the never-lighted fire.

I see myself an honour'd guest,
Thy partner in the flowery walk
Of letters, genial table-talk,
Or deep dispute, and graceful jest ;

While now thy prosperous labour fills
The lips of men with honest praise,
And sun by sun the happy days
Descend below the golden hills

With promise of a morn as fair ;
And all the train of bounteous
hours

Conduct by paths of growing powers,
To reverence and the silver hair ;

Till slowly worn her earthly robe,
Her lavish mission richly wrought,
Leaving great legacies of thought,
Thy spirit should fall from off the
globe ;

What time mine own might also flee,
As link'd with thine in love and
fate,

And, hovering o'er the dolorous
strait

To the other shore, involved in thee,

Arrive at last the blessed goal,
And He that died in Holy Land
Would reach us out the shining
hand,

And take us as a single soul.

What reed was that on which I leant ?
 Ah, backward fancy, wherefore
 wake
 The old bitterness again, and break
 The low beginnings of content.

LXXXIV

THIS truth came borne with bier
 and pall,
 I felt it, when I sorrow'd most,
 'Tis better to have loved and lost,
 Than never to have loved at all——

O true in word, and tried in deed,
 Demanding, so to bring relief
 To this which is our common
 grief,
 What kind of life is that I lead ;

And whether trust in things above
 Be dimm'd of sorrow, or sustain'd ;
 And whether love for him have
 drain'd
 My capabilities of love ;

Your words have virtue such as
 draws
 A faithful answer from the breast,
 Thro' light reproaches, half ex-
 prest,
 And loyal unto kindly laws.

My blood an even tenor kept,
 Till on mine ear this message falls,
 That in Vienna's fatal walls
 God's finger touch'd him, and he
 slept.

The great Intelligences fair
 That range above our mortal state,
 In circle round the blessed gate,
 Received and gave him welcome
 there ;

And led him thro' the blissful
 climes,
 And show'd him in the fountain
 fresh
 All knowledge that the sons of flesh
 Shall gather in the cycled times.

But I remain'd, whose hopes were
 dim,
 Whose life, whose thoughts were
 little worth,
 To wander on a darken'd earth,
 Where all things round me breathed
 of him.

O friendship, equal-poised control,
 O heart, with kindest motion
 warm,
 A sacred essence, other form,
 O solemn ghost, O crowned soul !

Yet none could better know than
 I,
 How much of act at human hands
 The sense of human will demands,
 By which we dare to live or die.

Whatever way my days decline,
 I felt and feel, tho' left alone,
 His being working in mine own,
 The footsteps of his life in mine ;

A life that all the Muses deck'd
 With gifts of grace, that might
 express
 All-comprehensive tenderness,
 All-subtilising intellect :

And so my passion hath not swerved
 To works of weakness, but I find
 An image comforting the mind,
 And in my grief a strength reserved.

Likewise the imaginative woe,
 That loved to handle spiritual
 strife,
 Diffused the shock thro' all my life,
 But in the present broke the blow.

My pulses therefore beat again
 For other friends that once I met ;
 Nor can it suit me to forget
 The mighty hopes that make us men.

I woo, your love : I count it crime
 To mourn for any overmuch ;
 I, the divided half of such
 A friendship as had master'd Time ;

Which masters Time indeed, and is For which be they that hold apart
 Eternal, separate from fears : The promise of the golden hours ?
 The all-assuming months and years First love, first friendship, equal
 Can take no part away from this : powers,

That marry with the virgin heart.

But Summer on the steaming floods,
 And Spring that swells the narrow
 brooks,
 And Autumn, with a noise of
 rooks,
 That gather in the waning woods,

Still mine, that cannot but deplore,
 That beats within a lonely place,
 That yet remembers his embrace,
 But at his footstep leaps no more,

And every pulse of wind and wave
 Recalls, in change of light or gloom,
 My old affection of the tomb,
 And my prime passion in the grave :
 My heart, tho' widow'd, may not
 rest
 Quite in the love of what is gone,
 But seeks to beat in time with one
 That warms another living breast.

My old affection of the tomb,
 A part of stillness, yearns to speak :
 " Arise, and get thee forth and seek
 A friendship for the years to come.
 Ah, take the imperfect gift I bring,
 Knowing the primrose yet is dear,
 The primrose of the later year,
 As not unlike to that of Spring.

I watch thee from the quiet shore ;
 Thy spirit up to mine can reach ;
 But in dear words of human speech
 We two communicate no more."

LXXXV

And I, " Can clouds of nature stain
 The starry clearness of the free ?
 How is it ? Canst thou feel for
 me
 Some painless sympathy with pain ? "

SWEET after showers, ambrosial air,
 That rollest from the gorgeous
 gloom

And lightly does the whisper fall ;
 " 'Tis hard for thee to fathom
 this ;

Of evening over brake and bloom
 And meadow, slowly breathing bare

I triumph in conclusive bliss,
 And that serene result of all."

The round of space, and rapt below
 Thro' all the dewy-tassell'd wood,
 And shadowing down the horned
 flood

So hold I commerce with the dead ;
 Or so methinks the dead would say ;
 Or so shall grief with symbols play,
 And pining life be fancy-fed.

In ripples, fan my brows and blow

Now looking to some settled end,
 That these things pass, and I shall
 prove
 A meeting somewhere, love with
 love,

The fever from my cheek, and sigh
 The full new life that feeds thy
 breath

Throughout my frame, till Doubt
 and Death,
 Ill brethren, let the fancy fly.

I crave your pardon, O my friend ;

LXXXVI

If not so fresh, with love as true,
 I, clasping brother-hands, aver
 I could not, if I would, transfer
 The whole I felt for him to you.
 I FAST beside the reverend walls
 In which of old I wore the gown ;
 I roved at random thro' the town,
 And saw the tumult of the halls ;

And heard once more in college fanes
 The storm their high-built organs
 make,
 And thunder-music, rolling, shake
 The prophets blazon'd on the panes ;

And caught once more the distant
 shout,
 The measured pulse of racing oars
 Among the willows ; paced the
 shores
 And many a bridge, and all about

The same gray flats again, and felt
 The same, but not the same ; and
 last
 Up that long walk of limes I past
 To see the rooms in which he dwelt.

Another name was on the door :
 I linger'd ; all within was noise
 Of songs, and clapping hands, and
 boys
 That crash'd the glass and beat the
 floor ;

Where once we held debate, a band
 Of youthful friends, on mind and
 art,
 And labour, and the changing
 mart,
 And all the framework of the land ;

When one would aim an arrow fair,
 But send it slackly from the string ;
 And one would pierce an outer
 ring,
 And one an inner, here and there ;

And last the master-bowman, he,
 Would cleave the mark. A willing
 ear
 We lent him. Who, but hung to
 hear
 The rapt oration flowing free

From point to point, with power and
 grace
 And music in the bounds of law,
 To those conclusions when we saw
 The God within him light his face,

And seem to lift the form, and glow
 In azure orbits heavenly-wise ;
 And over those ethereal eyes
 The bar of Michael Angelo.

LXXXVII

WILD bird, whose warble, liquid
 sweet,
 Rings Eden thro' the budded
 quicks,
 O tell me where the senses mix,
 O tell me where the passions meet,

Whence radiate : fierce extremes
 employ
 Thy spirits in the darkening leaf,
 And in the midmost heart of grief
 Thy passion clasps a secret joy :

And I—my harp would prelude woe—
 I cannot all command the strings ;
 The glory of the sum of things
 Will flash along the chords and go.

LXXXVIII

WITCH-ELMS that counterchange the
 floor
 Of this flat lawn with dusk and
 bright ;
 And thou, with all thy breadth and
 height
 Of foliage, towering sycamore ;

How often, hither wandering down,
 My Arthur found your shadows
 fair,
 And shook to all the liberal air
 The dust and din and steam of
 town :

He brought an eye for all he saw ;
 He mixt in all our simple sports ;
 They pleased him, fresh from
 brawling courts
 And dusty purlieus of the law.

O joy to him in this retreat,
 Immantled in ambrosial dark,
 To drink the cooler air, and mark
 The landscape winking thro' the
 heat :

O sound to rout the brood of cares,
 The sweep of scythe in morning
 dew,
 The gust that round the garden
 flew,
 And tumbled half the mellowing
 pears !

O bliss, when all in circle drawn
 About him, heart and ear were fed
 To hear him, as he lay and read
 The Tuscan poets on the lawn :

Or in the all-golden afternoon
 A guest, or happy sister, sung,
 Or here she brought the harp and
 flung
 A ballad to the brightening moon :

Nor less it pleased in livelier moods,
 Beyond the bounding hill to stray,
 And break the livelong summer day
 With banquet in the distant woods ;

Whereat we glanced from theme to
 theme,
 Discuss'd the books to love or hate,
 Or touch'd the changes of the state,
 Or threaded some Socratic dream ;

But if I praised the busy town,
 He loved to rail against it still,
 For "ground in yonder social mill
 We rub each other's angles down,

And merge " he said " in form and
 gloss
 The picturesque of man and man."
 We talk'd : the stream beneath us
 ran,
 The wine-flask lying couch'd in moss,

Or cool'd within the glooming wave ;
 And last, returning from afar,
 Before the crimson-circled star
 Had fall'n into her father's grave,

And brushing ankle-deep in flowers,
 We heard behind the woodbine
 veil
 The milk that bubbled in the pail,
 And buzzings of the honied hours.

LXXXIX

He tasted love with half his mind,
 Nor ever drank the inviolate spring
 Where nighest heaven, who first
 could fling
 This bitter seed among mankind ;

That could the dead, whose dying
 eyes
 Were closed with wail, resume their
 life,
 They would but find in child and
 wife
 An iron welcome when they rise :

'Twas well, indeed, when warm with
 wine,
 To pledge them with a kindly tear,
 To talk them o'er, to wish them
 here,
 To count their memories half divine ;

But if they came who past away,
 Behold their brides in other hands ;
 The hard heir strides about their
 lands,
 And will not yield them for a day.

Yea, tho' their sons were none of
 these,
 Not less the yet-loved sire would
 make
 Confusion worse than death, and
 shake
 The pillars of domestic peace.

Ah dear, but come thou back to me :
 Whatever change the years have
 wrought,
 I find not yet one lonely thought
 That cries against my wish for thee.

xc

WHEN rosy plumelets tuft the larch,
 And rarely pipes the mounted
 thrush ;
 Or underneath the barren bush
 Flits by the sea-blue bird of March ;

Come, wear the form by which I know
 Thy spirit in time among thy peers ;
 The hope of unaccomplish'd years
 Belarge and lucid round thy brow.

When summer's hourly-mellowing
 change
 May breathe, with many roses
 sweet,
 Upon the thousand waves of
 wheat,

That ripple round the lonely grange ;
 Descend, and touch, and enter ; hear
 The wish too strong for words to
 name ;

Come : not in watches of the night,
 But where the sunbeam broodeth
 warm,
 Come, beauteous in thine after
 form,

And like a finer light in light.

XCI

If any vision should reveal
 Thy likeness, I might count it vain
 As but the canker of the brain ;

Yea, tho' it spake and made appeal
 An hour's communion with the dead.

To chances where our lots were cast
 Together in the days behind,
 I might but say, I hear a wind
 Of memory murmuring the past.

Yea, tho' it spake and bared to view
 A fact within the coming year ;
 And tho' the months, revolving
 near,

Should prove the phantom-warning
 true,
 They haunt the silence of the breast,
 Imaginations calm and fair,
 The memory like a cloudless air,
 The conscience as a sea at rest :

Should prove the phantom-warning
 true,
 They might not seem thy prophecies,
 But spiritual presentiments,
 And such refraction of events
 As often rises ere they rise.

XCII

I SHALL not see thee. Dare I say
 No spirit ever brake the band
 That stays him from the native
 land,

Where first he walk'd when claspt in
 clay ?
 No visual shade of some one lost,
 But he, the Spirit himself, may
 come
 Where all the nerve of sense is
 numb ;
 Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost.

XCIII

How pure at heart and sound in
 head,

With what divine affections bold,
 Should be the man whose thought
 would hold

An hour's communion with the dead.

In vain shalt thou, or any, call
 The spirits from their golden day,
 Except, like them, thou too canst
 say,

My spirit is at peace with all.

They haunt the silence of the breast,
 Imaginations calm and fair,
 The memory like a cloudless air,
 The conscience as a sea at rest :

But when the heart is full of din,
 And doubt beside the portal waits,
 They can but listen at the gates,
 And hear the household jar within.

By night we linger'd on the lawn,
 For underfoot the herb was dry ;
 And genial warmth ; and o'er the
 sky

The silvery haze of summer drawn ;

And calm that let the tapers burn
 Unwavering : not a cricket chirr'd :
 The brook alone far-off was heard,
 And on the board the fluttering urn :

And bats went round in fragrant
 skies,
 And wheel'd or lit the filmy shapes
 That haunt the dusk, with ermine
 capes
 And woolly breasts and beaded eyes ;
 While now we sang old songs that
 peal'd
 From knoll to knoll, where, couch'd
 at ease,
 The white kine glimmer'd, and the
 trees
 Laid their dark arms about the field.
 But when those others, one by one,
 Withdrew themselves from me and
 night,
 And in the house light after light
 Went out, and I was all alone,
 A hunger seized my heart ; I read
 Of that glad year which once had
 been,
 In those fall'n leaves which kept
 their green,
 The noble letters of the dead :
 And strangely on the silence broke
 The silent-speaking words, and
 strange
 Was love's dumb cry defying
 change
 To test his worth ; and strangely
 spoke
 The faith, the vigour, bold to dwell
 On doubts that drive the coward
 back,
 And keen thro' wordy snares to
 track
 Suggestion to her inmost cell.
 So word by word, and line by line,
 The dead man touch'd me from the
 past,
 And all at once it seem'd at last
 His living soul was flash'd on mine,
 And mine in his was wound, and
 whirl'd
 About empyreal heights of thought,
 And came on that which is, and
 caught
 The deep pulsations of the world,

Æonian music measuring out
 The steps of Time—the shocks of
 Chance—
 The blows of Death. At length my
 trance
 Was cancell'd, stricken thro' with
 doubt.
 Vague words ! but ah, how hard to
 frame
 In matter-moulded forms of speech,
 Or ev'n for intellect to reach
 Thro' memory that which I became :
 Till now the doubtful dusk reveal'd
 The knolls once more where,
 couch'd at ease,
 The white kine glimmer'd, and the
 trees
 Laid their dark arms about the field :
 And suck'd from out the distant
 gloom
 A breeze began to tremble o'er
 The large leaves of the sycamore,
 And fluctuate all the still perfume,
 And gathering freshlier overhead,
 Rock'd the full-foliaged elms, and
 swung
 The heavy-folded rose, and flung
 The lilies to and fro, and said
 " The dawn, the dawn," and died
 away ;
 And East and West, without a
 breath,
 Mixt their dim lights, like life and
 death,
 To broaden into boundless day.

xcv

You say, but with no touch of scorn,
 Sweet-hearted, you, whose light-
 blue eyes
 Are tender over drowning flies,
 You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.
 I know not : one indeed I knew
 In many a subtle question versed,
 Who touch'd a jarring lyre at first,
 But ever strove to make it true :

- Perplex in faith, but pure in deeds,
At last he beat his music out.
There lives more faith in honest
doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds.
- He fought his doubts and gather'd
strength,
He would not make his judgment
blind,
He faced the spectres of the mind
And laid them: thus he came at
length
- To find a stronger faith his own;
And Power was with him in the
night,
Which makes the darkness and the
light,
And dwells not in the light alone,
- But in the darkness and the cloud,
As over Sinai's peaks of old,
While Israel made their gods of
gold,
Altho' the trumpet blew so loud.
- My love has talk'd with rocks and
trees;
He finds on misty mountain-ground
His own vast shadow glory-
crown'd;
He sees himself in all he sees.
- Two partners of a married life—
I look'd on these and thought of
thee
In vastness and in mystery,
And of my spirit as of a wife.
- These two—they dwelt with eye on
eye,
Their hearts of old have beat in
tune,
Their meetings made December
June,
Their every parting was to die.
- Their love has never past away;
The days she never can forget
Are earnest that he loves her yet,
Whate'er the faithless people say.
- Her life is lone, he sits apart,
He loves her yet, she will not weep,
Tho' rapt in matters dark and deep
He seems to slight her simple heart.
- He thruds the labyrinth of the mind,
He reads the secret of the star,
He seems so near and yet so far,
He looks so cold: she thinks him
kind.
- She keeps the gift of years before,
A wither'd violet is her bliss;
She knows not what his greatness
is;
For that, for all, she loves him more.
- For him she plays, to him she sings
Of early faith and plighted vows;
She knows but matters of the
house,
And he, he knows a thousand things.
- Her faith is fixt and cannot move,
She darkly feels him great and
wise,
She dwells on him with faithful
eyes,
"I cannot understand: I love."
- XCVII
- You leave us: you will see the
Rhine,
And those fair hills I sail'd below,
When I was there with him; and
go
By summer belts of wheat and vine
- To where he breathed his latest
breath,
That City. All her splendour
seems
No livelier than the wisp that
gleams
On Lethe in the eyes of Death.
- Let her great Danube rolling fair
Enwind her isles, unmark'd of me:
I have not seen, I will not see
Vienna; rather dream that there,

A treble darkness, Evil haunts
 The birth, the bridal ; friend from
 friend
 Is oftener parted, fathers bend
 Above more graves, a thousand
 wants

Gnarr at the heels of men, and prey
 By each cold hearth, and sadness
 flings
 Her shadow on the blaze of kings :
 And yet myself have heard him
 say,

That not in any mother town
 With statelier progress to and fro
 The double tides of chariots flow
 By park and suburb under brown

Of lustier leaves ; nor more content,
 He told me, lives in any crowd,
 When all is gay with lamps, and
 loud
 With sport and song, in booth and
 tent,

Imperial halls, or open plain ;
 And wheels the circled dance, and
 breaks
 The rocket molten into flakes
 Of crimson or in emerald rain.

xcviii

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,
 So loud with voices of the birds,
 So thick with lowings of the herds,
 Day, when I lost the flower of men ;

Who tremblest thro' thy darkling
 red
 On yon swoll'n brook that bubbles
 fast
 By meadows breathing of the past,
 And woodlands holy to the dead ;

Who murmurest in the foliaged eaves
 A song that slights the coming
 care,
 And Autumn laying here and
 there
 A fiery finger on the leaves ;

Who wakenest with thy balmy
 breath

To myriads on the genial earth,
 Memories of bridal, or of birth,
 And unto myriads more, of death.

O, wheresoever those may be,
 Betwixt the slumber of the poles,
 To-day they count as kindred souls ;
 They know me not, but mourn with

xcix

I CLIMB the hill : from end to end
 Of all the landscape underneath,
 I find no place that does not
 breathe

Some gracious memory of my friend ;

No gray old grange, or lonely fold,
 Or low morass and whispering reeds,
 Or simple stile from mead to
 mead,
 Or sheepwalk up the windy wold ;

Nor hoary knoll of ash and haw
 That hears the latest linnets trill,
 Nor quarry trench'd along the hill,
 And haunted by the wrangling daw ;

Nor runlet tinkling from the rock ;
 Nor pastoral rivulet that swerves
 To left and right thro' meadowy
 curves,
 That feed the mothers of the flock ;

But each has pleased a kindred eye,
 And each reflects a kindlier day ;
 And, leaving these, to pass away,
 I think once more he seems to die.

UNWATCH'D, the garden bough shall
 sway,
 The tender blossom flutter down,
 Unloved, that beech will gather
 brown,
 This maple burn itself away ;

Unloved, the sun-flower, shining fair,
 Ray round with flames her disk
 of seed,
 And many a rose-carnation feed
 With summer spice the humming air ;

Unloved, by many a sandy bar,
 The brook shall babble down the
 plain,
 At noon or when the lesser wain
 Is twisting round the polar star ;

Uncared for, gird the windy grove,
 And flood the haunts of hern and
 crake ;
 Or into silver arrows break
 The sailing moon in creek and cove ;

Till from the garden and the wild
 A fresh association blow,
 And year by year the landscape
 grow
 Familiar to the stranger's child ;

As year by year the labourer tills
 His wonted glebe, or lops the
 glades ;
 And year by year our memory
 fades
 From all the circle of the hills.

We leave the well-beloved place
 Where first we gazed upon the
 sky ;
 The roofs, that heard our earliest
 cry,
 Will shelter one of stranger race.

We go, but ere we go from home,
 As down the garden-walks I move,
 Two spirits of a diverse love
 Contend for loving masterdom.

One whispers, here thy boyhood sung
 Long since its matin song, and
 heard
 The low love-language of the bird
 In native hazels tassel-hung.

The other answers, " Yea, but here
 Thy feet have stray'd in after hours
 With thy lost friend among the
 bowers,
 And this hath made them trebly dear."

These two have striven half the day,
 And each prefers his separate
 claim,
 Poor rivals in a losing game,
 That will not yield each other way.

I turn to go : my feet are set
 To leave the pleasant fields and
 farms ;
 They mix in one another's arms
 To one pure image of regret.

On that last night before we went
 From out the doors where I was
 bred,
 I dream'd a vision of the dead,
 Which left my after-morn content.

Methought I dwelt within a hall,
 And maidens with me : distant
 hills
 From hidden summits fed with
 rills
 A river sliding by the wall.

The hall with harp and carol rang.
 They sang of what is wise and
 good
 And graceful. In the centre stood
 A statue veil'd, to which they sang ;

And which, tho' veil'd, was known to
 me,
 The shape of him I loved, and love
 For ever : then flew in a dove
 And brought a summons from the
 sea :

And when they learnt that I must go
 They wept and wail'd, but led the
 way
 To where a little shallop lay
 At anchor in the flood below ;

And on by many a level mead,
 And shadowing bluff that made
 the banks,
 We glided winding under ranks
 Of iris, and the golden reed ;

- And still as vaster grew the shore,
And roll'd the floods in grander
space,
The maidens gather'd strength and
grace
And presence, lordlier than before ;
And I myself, who sat apart
And watch'd them, wax'd in
every limb ;
I felt the thews of Anakim,
The pulses of a Titan's heart ;
- As one would sing the death of war,
And one would chant the history
Of that great race, which is to be,
And one the shaping of a star ;
- Until the forward-creeping tides
Began to foam, and we to draw
From deep to deep, to where we
saw
A great ship lift her shining sides.
- The man we loved was there on deck,
But thrice as large as man he
bent
To greet us. Up the side I went,
And fell in silence on his neck :
- Whereat those maidens with one
mind
Bewail'd their lot ; I did them
wrong :
" We served thee here," they said,
" so long,
And wilt thou leave us now behind ? "
- So rapt I was, they could not win
An answer from my lips, but he
Replying, " Enter likewise ye
And go with us : " they enter'd in.
- And while the wind began to sweep
A music out of sheet and shroud,
We steer'd her toward a crimson
cloud
That landlike slept along the deep.
- And still as vaster grew the shore,
And roll'd the floods in grander
space,
The maidens gather'd strength and
grace
And presence, lordlier than before ;
And I myself, who sat apart
And watch'd them, wax'd in
every limb ;
I felt the thews of Anakim,
The pulses of a Titan's heart ;
- Likestrangers' voices here they sound,
In lands where not a memory
strays,
Nor landmark breathes of other
days,
But all is new unhallow'd ground.
- TO-NIGHT ungather'd let us leave
This laurel, let this holly stand :
We live within the stranger's land,
And strangely falls our Christmas
eve.
- Our father's dust is left alone
And silent under other snows :
There in due time the woodbine
blows,
The violet comes, but we are gone.
- No more shall wayward grief abuse
The genial hour with mask and
mime ;
For change of place, like growth
of time,
Has broke the bond of dying use.
- Let cares that petty shadows cast,
By which our lives are chiefly
proved,
A little spare the night I loved,
And hold it solemn to the past.
- But let no footstep beat the floor,
Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm ;
For who would keep an ancient
form
Thro' which the spirit breathes no
more ?
- THE time draws near the birth of
Christ ;
The moon is hid, the night is still ;
A single church below the hill
Is pealing, folded in the mist.
- Be neither song, nor game, nor feast ;
Nor harp be touch'd, nor flute be
blown ;
No dance, no motion, save alone
What lightens in the lucid east

Of rising worlds by yonder wood.

Long sleeps the summer in the
seed ;

Run out your measured arcs, and
lead

The closing cycle rich in good.

CVI

It is the day when he was born,
A bitter day that early sank
Behind a purple-frosty bank
Of vapour, leaving night forlorn.

RING out wild bells to the wild sky

The flying cloud, the frosty light :

The year is dying in the night ;

Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

The time admits not flowers or leaves
To deck the banquet. Fiercely
flies

The blast of North and East, and
ice

Makes daggers at the sharpen'd
eaves,

Ring out the old, ring in the new,

Ring, happy bells, across the snow :

The year is going, let him go ;

Ring out the false, ring in the true.

And bristles all the brakes and
thorns

To yon hard crescent, as she hangs
Above the wood which grides and
clangs

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no
more ;

Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Its leafless ribs and iron horns

Together, in the drifts that pass

To darken on the rolling brine

That breaks the coast. But fetch
the wine,

Arrange the board and brim the glass ;

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife ;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Bring in great logs and let them lie,
To make a solid core of heat ;

Be cheerful-minded, talk and treat
Of all things ev'n as he were by ;

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times ;
Ring out, ring out my mournful
rhymes,

But ring the fuller minstrel in.

We keep the day. With festal cheer,
With books and music, surely we
Will drink to him, whate'er he be,
And sing the songs he loved to hear.

Ring out false pride in place and
blood,

The civic slander and the spite ;

Ring in the love of truth and right,

Ring in the common love of good.

CVII

Ring out old shapes of foul disease ;
Ring out the narrowing lust of
gold ;

Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

I WILL not shut me from my kind,
And, lest I stiffen into stone,
I will not eat my heart alone,
Nor feed with sighs a passing wind :

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand ;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

What profit lies in barren faith,
And vacant yearning, tho' with
might

To scale the heaven's highest
height,

Or dive below the wells of Death ?

What find I in the highest place,
But mine own phantom chanting
hymns ?

And on the depths of death there
swims
The reflex of a human face.

I'll rather take what fruit may be
Of sorrow under human skies :
'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise,
Whatever wisdom sleep with thee

HEART-AFFLUENCE in discursive talk
From household fountains never
dry ;

The critic clearness of an eye,
That saw thro' all the Muses' walk.

Seraphic intellect and force
To seize and throw the doubts of
man ;

Impassion'd logic, which outran
The hearer in its fiery course ;

High nature amorous of the good,
But touch'd with no ascetic gloom ;
And passion pure in snowy bloom
Thro' all the years of April blood ;

A love of freedom rarely felt,
Of freedom in her regal seat
Of England ; not the schoolboy
heat,

The blind hysterics of the Celt ;

And manhood fused with female grace
In such a sort, the child would
twine

A trustful hand, unask'd, in thine,
And find his comfort in thy face ;

All these have been, and thee mine
eyes

Have look'd on : if they look'd in
vain,

My shame is greater who remain,
Nor let thy wisdom make me wise.

THY converse drew us with delight,
The men of rathe and riper years :
The feeble soul, a haunt of fears,
Forgot his weakness in thy sight.

On thee the loyal-hearted hung,
The proud was half disarm'd of
pride,

Nor cared the serpent at thy side
To flicker with his double tongue.

The stern were mild when thou wert
by,

The flippant put himself to school
And heard thee, and the brazen fool
Was soften'd, and he knew not why ;

While I, thy dearest, sat apart,
And felt thy triumph was as mine ;
And loved them more, that they
were thine,

The graceful tact, the Christian art ;

Not mine the sweetness or the skill,
But mine the love that will not
tire,

And, born of love, the vague desire
That spurs an imitative will.

CX

THE churl in spirit, up or down
Along the scale of ranks, thro' all,
To him who grasps a golden ball,
By blood a king, at heart a clown ;

The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil
His want in forms for fashion's
sake,

Will let his coltish nature break
At seasons thro' the gilded pale :.

For who can always act ? but he,
To whom a thousand memories call,
Not being less but more than all
The gentleness he seem'd to be,

Best seem'd the thing he was, and
join'd

Each office of the social hour
To noble manners, as the flower
And native growth of noble mind ;

Nor ever narrowness or spite,
Or villain fancy fleeting by,
Drew in the expression of an eye,
Where God and Nature met in
light ;

And thus he bore without abuse
The grand old name of gentleman
Defamed by every charlatan,
And soil'd with all ignoble use.

CXI

HIGH wisdom holds my wisdom less,
That I, who gaze with temperate
eyes

On glorious insufficiencies,
Set light by narrower perfectness.

But thou, that fillest all the room
Of all my love, art reason why
I seem to cast a careless eye
On souls, the lesser lords of doom.

For what wert thou? some novel
power
Sprang up for ever at a touch,
And hope could never hope too
much,
In watching thee from hour to hour,

Large elements in order brought,
And tracts of calm from tempest
made,
And world-wide fluctuation sway'd
In vassal tides that follow'd thought.

CXII

'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise;
Yet how much wisdom sleeps with
thee

Which not alone had guided me,
But served the seasons that may rise;

For can I doubt, who knew thee
keen

In intellect, with force and skill
To strive, to fashion, to fulfil—

I doubt not what thou wouldst have
been:

A life of civic action warm,
A soul on highest mission sent,
A potent voice of Parliament,
A pillar steadfast in the storm,

Should licensed boldness gather force,
Becoming, when the time has birth,
A lever to uplift the earth
And roll it in another course,

With thousand shocks that come and
go,

With agonies, with energies,
With overthrowings, and with
cries,

And undulations to and fro.

CXIII

Who loves not Knowledge? Who
shall rail

Against her beauty? May she mix
With men and prosper! Who shall
fix

Her pillars? Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire:
She sets her forward countenance
And leaps into the future chance,
Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain—
She cannot fight the fear of death.
What is she, cut from love and faith,
But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of Demons? fiery-hot to burst
All barriers in her onward race
For power. Let her know her
place;
She is second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,
If all be not in vain; and guide
Her footsteps, moving side by side
With wisdom, like the younger child:

For she is earthly of the mind,
But Wisdom heavenly of the soul.
O, friend, who camest to thy goal
so early, leaving me behind,

would the great world grew like
thee,
Who grewest not alone in power
And knowledge, but by year and
hour
In reverence and in charity.

CXIV

Now fades the last long streak of
snow,
Now burgcons every maze of quick
About the flowering squares, and
thick
By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and
long,
The distance takes a lovelier hue,
And drown'd in yonder living blue
The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and
lea,
The flocks are whiter down the
vale,
And milkier every milky sail
On winding stream or distant sea ;

Where now the seamew pipes, or
dives
In yonder greening gleam, and fly
The happy birds, that change their
sky
To build and brood ; that live their
lives

From land to land ; and in my breast
Spring wakens too ; and my regret
Becomes an April violet,
And buds and blossoms like the rest.

CXV

Is it, then, regret for buried time
That keenlier in sweet April wakes,
And meets the year, and gives and
takes
The colours of the crescent prime ?

Not all : the songs, the stirring air,
The life re-orient out of dust,
Cry thro' the sense to hearten trust
In that which made the world so fair.

Not all regret : the face will shine
Upon me, while I muse alone ;
And that dear voice, I once have
known,
Still speak to me of me and mine :

T.F.W.

Yet less of sorrow lives in me
For days of happy commune
dead ;
Less yearning for the friendship
fled,
Than some strong bond which is to
be.

CXVI

O DAYS and hours, your work is
this,
To hold me from my proper place,
A little while from his embrace,
For fuller gain of after bliss :

That out of distance might ensue
Desire of nearness doubly sweet ;
And unto meeting when we meet,
Delight a hundredfold accrue,

For every grain of sand that runs,
And every span of shade that steals,
And every kiss of toothed wheels,
And all the courses of the suns.

CONTEMPLATE all this work of Time,
The giant labouring in his youth ;
Nor dream of human love and
truth,
As dying Nature's earth and lime ;
But trust that those we call the dead
Are breathers of an ampler day
For ever nobler ends. They say,
The solid earth whereon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,
And grew to seeming-random
forms,
The seeming prey of cyclic storms,
Till at the last arose the man ;

Who throve and branch'd from clime
to clime,
The herald of a higher race,
And of himself in higher place,
If so he type this work of time

Within himself, from more to more :
Or, crown'd with attributes of woe
Like glories, move his course, and
show
That life is not as idle ore,

But iron dug from central gloom,
And heated hot with burning fears,
And dipt in baths of hissing tears,
And batter'd with the shocks of doom

To shape and use. Arise and fly
The reeling Faun, the sensual feast;
Move upward, working out the
beast,
And let the ape and tiger die.

Doors, where my heart was used to
beat
So quickly, not as one that weeps
I come once more; the city sleeps;
I smell the meadow in the street;

I hear a chirp of birds; I see
Betwixt the black fronts long-
withdrawn
A light-blue lane of early dawn,
And think of early days and thee,

And bless thee, for thy lips are bland
And bright the friendship of thine
eye;
And in my thoughts with scarce a
sigh

I take the pressure of thine hand.

CXIX

I TRUST I have not wasted breath:
I think we are not wholly brain,
Magnetic mockeries; not in vain,
Like Paul with beasts, I fought with
Death;

Not only cunning casts in clay:
Let Science prove we are, and then
What matters Science unto men,
At least to me? I would not stay.

Let him, the wiser man who springs
Hereafter, up from childhood shape
His action like the greater ape,
But I was born to other things.

CXX

SAD Hesper o'er the buried sun
And ready, thou, to die with him,
Thou watchest all things ever dim
And dimmer, and a glory done:

The team is loosen'd from the wain,
The boat is drawn upon the shore;
Thou listenest to the closing door,
And life is darken'd in the brain.

Bright Phosphor, fresher for the
night,
By thee the world's great work is
heard
Beginning, and the wakeful bird;
Behind thee comes the greater light:

The market boat is on the stream,
And voices hail it from the brink;
Thou hear'st the village hammer
clink,
And see'st the moving of the team.

Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double
name
For what is one, the first, the last,
Thou, like my present and my
past,
Thy place is changed; thou art the
same.

Oh, wast thou with me, dearest, then,
While I rose up against my doom,
And yearn'd to burst the folded
gloom,

To bare the eternal Heavens again,

To feel once more, in placid awe,
The strong imagination roll
A sphere of stars about my soul,
In all her motion one with law;

If thou wert with me, and the grave
Divide us not, be with me now,
And enter in at breast and brow,
Till all my blood, a fuller wave,

Be quicken'd with a livelier breath,
And like an inconsiderate boy,
As in the former flash of joy,
I slip the thoughts of life and death;

And all the breeze of Fancy blows,
And every dew-drop paints a bow,
The wizard lightnings deeply glow,
And every thought breaks out a rose.

THERE rolls the deep where grew the
tree.

O earth, what changes thou hast
seen !

There where the long street roars,
hath been
The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow
From form to form, and nothing
stands ;

They melt like mist, the solid
lands,
Like clouds they shape themselves
and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,
And dream my dream, and hold
it true ;
For tho' my lips may breathe
adieu,
I cannot think the thing farewell.

CXXIII

THAT which we dare invoke to bless ;
Our dearest faith ; our ghastliest
doubt ;
He, They, One, All ; within,
without ;
The Power in darkness whom we
guess ;

I found Him not in world or sun,
Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye ;
Nor thro' the questions men may
try,
The petty cobwebs we have spun :

If e'er when faith had fall'n asleep,
I heard a voice " believe no more "
And heard an ever-breaking shore
That tumbled in the Godless deep ;

A warmth within the breast would
melt
The freezing reason's colder part,
And like a man in wrath the heart
Stood up and answer'd " I have felt."

No, like a child in doubt and fear :
But that blind clamour made me
wise ;

Then was I as a child that cries,
But, crying, knows his father near ;

And what I am beheld again
What is, and no man understands ;
And out of darkness came the
hands
That reach thro' nature, moulding
men.

CXXIV

WHATEVER I have said or sung,
Some bitter notes my harp would
give,
Yea, tho' there often seem'd to
live
A contradiction on the tongue,

Yet Hope had never lost her youth ;
She did but look through dimmer
eyes ;
Or Love but play'd with gracious
lies,
Because he felt so fix'd in truth :

And if the song were full of care,
He breathed the spirit of the song ;
And if the words were sweet and
strong
He set his royal signet there ;

Abiding with me till I sail
To seek thee on the mystic deeps,
And this electric force, that keeps
A thousand pulses dancing, fail.

CXXV

Love is and was my Lord and King,
And in his presence I attend
To hear the tidings of my friend,
Which every hour his couriers bring.

Love is and was my King and Lord,
And will be, tho' as yet I keep
Within his court on earth, and sleep
Encompass'd by his faithful guard,

And hear at times a sentinel
 Who moves about from place to
 place,
 And whispers to the worlds of space,
 In the deep night, that all is well.

AND all is well, tho' faith and form
 Be sunder'd in the night of fear ;
 Well roars the storm to those that
 hear

A deeper voice across the storm,

Proclaiming social truth shall spread,
 And justice, ev'n tho' thrice again
 The red fool-fury of the Seine
 Should pile her barricades with dead.

But ill for him that wears a crown,
 And him, the lazar, in his rags :
 They tremble, the sustaining crags ;
 The spires of ice are toppled down,

And molten up, and roar in flood ;
 The fortress crashes from on high,
 The brute earth lightens to the sky,
 And the great Æon sinks in blood,

And compass'd by the fires of Hell ;
 While thou, dear spirit, happy star,
 O'erlook'st the tumult from afar,
 And smilest, knowing all is well.

CXXVII

THE love that rose on stronger wings,
 Unpalsied when he met with Death,
 Is comrade of the lesser faith
 That sees the course of human things.

No doubt vast eddies in the flood
 Of onward time shall yet be made,
 And throned races may degrade ;
 Yet O ye mysteries of good,

Wild Hours that fly with Hope and
 Fear,

If all your office had to do
 With old results that look like
 new ;

If this were all your mission here,

To draw, to sheathe a useless sword,
 To fool the crowd with glorious
 lies,

To cleave a creed in sects and cries,
 To change the bearing of a word,

To shift an arbitrary power,
 To cramp the student at his desk,
 To make old bareness picturesque
 And tuft with grass a feudal tower ;

Why then my scorn might well de-
 scend

On you and yours. I see in part
 That all, as in some piece of art,
 Is toil coöperant to an end.

CXXVIII

DEAR friend, far off, my lost desire,
 So far, so near in woe and weal ;
 O loved the most, when most I feel
 There is a lower and a higher ;

Known and unknown ; human,
 divine ;

Sweet human hand and lips and
 eye ;

Dear heavenly friend that canst not
 die

Mine, mine, for ever, ever mine ;

Strange friend, past, present, and to
 be ;

Loved deeper, darker under-
 stood ;

Behold, I dream a dream of good,
 And mingle all the world with thee.

THY voice is on the rolling air ;
 I hear thee where the waters run ;
 Thou standest in the rising sun,
 And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then ? I cannot
 guess ;

But tho' I seem in star and flower
 To feel thee some diffusive power,
 I do not therefore love thee less :

My love involves the love before ;
 My love is vaster passion now ;
 Tho' mix'd with God and Nature
 thou,

I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh ;
 I have thee still, and I rejoice ;
 I prosper, circled with thy voice ;
 I shall not lose thee tho' I die.

CXXX

O LIVING will that shalt endure
When all that seems shall suffer
shock,

Rise in the spiritual rock,
Flow thro' our deeds and make them
pure,

That we may lift from out of dust
A voice as unto him that hears,
A cry above the conquer'd years
To one that with us works, and trust,

With faith that comes of self-control,
The truths that never can be
proved

Until we close with all we loved,
And all we flow from, soul in soul.

O TRUE and tried, so well and long,
Demand not thou a marriage lay;
In that it is thy marriage day
Is music more than any song.

Nor have I felt so much of bliss
Since first he told me that he loved
A daughter of our house; nor
proved

Since that dark day a day like this;

Tho' I since then have number'd o'er
Some thrice three years: they went
and came,

Remade the blood and changed
the frame,
And yet is love not less, but more;

No longer caring to embalm
In dying songs a dead regret,
But like a statue solid-set,
And moulded in colossal calm.

Regret is dead, but love is more
Than in the summers that are
flown,

For I myself with these have grown
To something greater than before;

Which makes appear the songs I made
As echoes out of weaker times,
As half but idle brawling rhymes,
The sport of random sun and shade.

But where is she, the bridal flower,
That must be made a wife ere
noon?

She enters, glowing like the moon
Of Eden on its bridal bower:

On me she bends her blissful eyes
And then on thee; they meet thy
look

And brighten like the star that
shook

Betwixt the palms of paradise.

O when her life was yet in bud,
He too foretold the perfect rose.
For thee she grew, for thee she
grows

For ever, and as fair as good.

And thou art worthy; full of power;
As gentle; liberal-minded, great,
Consistent; wearing all that weight
Of learning lightly like a flower.

But now set out: the noon is near,
And I must give away the bride;
She fears not, or with thee beside
And me behind her, will not fear:

For I that danced her on my knee,
That watch'd her on her nurse's
arm,

That shielded all her life from harm
At last must part with her to thee;

Now waiting to be made a wife,
Her feet, my darling, on the dead;
Their pensive tablets round her
head,

And the most living words of life

Breathed in her ear. The ring is on,
The "wilt thou" answer'd, and
again

The "wilt thou" ask'd, till out of
twain

Her sweet "I will" has made ye one.

Now sign your names, which shall be
read,

Mute symbols of a joyful morn,
By village eyes as yet unborn;
The names are sign'd, and overhead

- Begins the clash and clang that tells
 The joy to every wandering
 breeze ;
 The blind wall rocks, and on the
 trees
 The dead leaf trembles to the bells.
- O happy hour, and happier hours
 Await them. Many a merry face
 Salutes them--maidens of the
 place,
 That pelt us in the porch with flowers.
- O happy hour, behold the bride
 With him to whom her hand I gave.
 They leave the porch, they pass the
 grave
 That has to-day its sunny side.
- To-day the grave is bright for me,
 For them the light of life increased,
 Who stay to share the morning
 feast,
 Who rest to-night beside the sea.
- Let all my genial spirits advance
 To meet and greet a whiter sun ;
 My drooping memory will not shun
 The foaming grape of eastern France.
- It circles round, and fancy plays,
 And hearts are warm'd and faces
 bloom,
 As drinking health to bride and
 groom
 We wish them store of happy days.
- Nor count me all to blame if I
 Conjecture of a stiller guest,
 Perchance, perchance, among the
 rest,
 And, tho' in silence, wishing joy.
- But they must go, the time draws on,
 And those white-favour'd horses
 wait ;
 They rise, but linger ; it is late ;
 Farewell, we kiss, and they are gone.
- A shade falls on us like the dark
 From little cloudlets on the grass,
 But sweeps away as out we pass
 To range the woods, to roam the park,
- Discussing how their courtship grew,
 And talk of others that are wed,
 And how she look'd, and what he
 said,
 And back we came at fall of dew.
- Again the feast, the speech, the glee,
 The shade of passing thought, the
 wealth
 Of words and wit, the double
 health,
 The crowning cup, the three-times-
 three,
- And last the dance ;—till I retire :
 Dumb is that tower which spake
 so loud,
 And high in heaven the streaming
 cloud,
 And on the downs a rising fire :
- And rise, O moon, from yonder down,
 Till over down and over dale
 All night the shining vapour sail
 And pass the silent-lighted town,
- The white-faced halls, the glancing
 rills,
 And catch at every mountain head,
 And o'er the friths that branch and
 spread
 Their sleeping silver thro' the hills ;
- And touch with shade the bridal
 doors,
 With tender gloom the roof, the
 wall ;
 And breaking let the splendour
 fall
 To spangle all the happy shores
- By which they rest, and ocean sounds,
 And, star and system rolling past,
 A soul shall draw from out the
 vast
 And strike his being into bounds.
- And, moved thro' life of lower phase,
 Result in man, be born and think,
 And act and love, a closer link
 Betwixt us and the crowning race

Of those that, eye to eye, shall look	Whereof the man, that with me-
On knowledge ; under whose com-	trod
mand	This planet, was a noble type
Is Earth and Earth's, and in their	Appearing ere the times were
hand	ripe,
Is Nature like an open book ;	That friend of mine who lives in
	God,
No longer half-akin to brute,	
For all we thought and loved and	That God, which ever lives and
did,	loves,
And hoped, and suffer'd, is but	One God, one law, one element,
seed	And one far-off divine event,
Of what in them is flower and fruit ;	To which the whole creation moves.

MAUD, AND OTHER POEMS

MAUD

PART I

I

I

I HATE the dreadful hollow behind
the little wood,
Its lips in the field above are dabbled
with blood-red heath,
The red-ribb'd ledges drip with a
silent horror of blood,
And Echo there, whatever is ask'd
her, answers "Death."

II

For there in the ghastly pit long since
a body was found,
His who had given me life—O father!
O God! was it well?—
Mangled, and flatten'd, and crush'd,
and dinted into the ground:
There yet lies the rock that fell with
him when he fell.

III

Did he fling himself down? who
knows? for a vast speculation
had fail'd,
And ever he mutter'd and madden'd,
and ever wann'd with despair,
And out he walk'd when the wind
like a broken worldling wail'd,
And the flying gold of the ruin'd
woodlands drove thro' the air.

IV

I remember the time, for the roots of
my hair were stirr'd
By a shuffled step, by a dead weight
trail'd, by a whisper'd fright,
And my pulses closed their gates with
a shock on my heart as I heard
The shrill-edged shriek of a mother
divide the shuddering night.

V

Villainy somewhere! whose? One
says, we are villains all.
Not he: his honest fame should at
least by me be maintain'd:
But that old man, now lord of the
broad estate and the Hall,
Dropt off gorged from a scheme that
had left us flaccid and drain'd.

VI

Why do they prate of the blessings of
Peace? we have made them a
curse,
Pickpockets, each hand lusting for
all that is not its own;
And lust of gain, in the spirit of Cain,
is it better or worse
Than the heart of the citizen hissing
in war on his own hearthstone?

VII

But these are the days of advance,
the works of the men of mind,
When who but a fool would have
faith in a tradesman's ware or
his word?
Is it peace or war? Civil war, as I
think, and that of a kind
The viler, as underhand, not openly
bearing the sword.

VIII

Sooner or later I too may passively
take the print
Of the golden age—why not? I
have neither hope nor trust;
May make my heart as a millstone,
set my face as a flint,
Cheat and be cheated, and die: who
knows? we are ashes and dust.

IX

Peace sitting under her olive, and
slurring the days gone by,
When the poor are hovell'd and
hustled together, each sex, like
swine,
When only the ledger lives, and when
only not all men lie;
Peace in her vineyard—yes!—but a
company forges the wine.

And the vitriol madness flushes up
in the ruffian's head,
Till the filthy by-lane rings to the
yell of the trampled wife,
While chalk and alum and plaster
are sold to the poor for bread,
And the spirit of murder works in the
very means of life,

XI

And Sleep must lie down arm'd, for
the villainous centre-bits
Grind on the wakeful ear in the hush
of the moonless nights,
While another is cheating the sick
of a few last gasps, as he sits
To pestle a poison'd poison behind
his crimson lights.

XII

When a Mammonite mother kills her
babe for a burial fee,
And Timour-Mammon grins on a
pile of children's bones,
Is it peace or war? better, war!
loud war by land and by sea,
War with a thousand battles, and
shaking a hundred thrones.

XIII

For I trust if an enemy's fleet came
yonder round by the hill,
And the rushing battle-bolt sang
from the three-decker out of the
foam,

That the smoothfaced snubnosed
rogue would leap from his counter
and till,
And strike, if he could, were it but
with his cheating yardwand,
home.—

XIV

What! am I raging alone as my father
raged in his mood?
Must I too creep to the hollow and
dash myself down and die
Rather than hold by the law that I
made, nevermore to brood
On a horror of shatter'd limbs and
a wretched swindler's lie?

XV

Would there be sorrow for *me*? there
was *love* in the passionate
shriek,
Love for the silent thing that had
made false haste to the grave—
Wrapt in a cloak, as I saw him,
and thought he would rise and
speak
And rave at the lie and the liar, ah
God, as he used to rave.

I am sick of the Hall and the hill,
I am sick of the moor and the
main.

Why should I stay? can a sweeter
chance ever come to me here?
O, having the nerves of motion as
well as the nerves of pain,
Were it not wise if I fled from the
place and the pit and the fear?

XVII

Workmen up at the Hall!—they are
coming back from abroad;
The dark old place will be gilt by the
touch of a millionaire:
I have heard, I know not whence,
of the singular beauty of Maud;
I play'd with the girl when a child;
she promised then to be fair,

III

Maud with her venturous climbings
and tumbles and childish escapes,
Maud the delight of the village, the
ringing joy of the Hall,
Maud with her sweet purse-mouth
when my father dangled the
grapes,
Maud the beloved of my mother, the
moon-faced darling of all,—

What is she now? My dreams are
bad. She may bring me a
curse.

No, there is fatter game on the moor;
she will let me alone.

Thanks, for the fiend best knows
whether woman or man be the
worse.

I will bury myself in my books, and
the Devil may pipe to his own.

II

LONG have I sigh'd for a calm: God
grant I may find it at last!

It will never be broken by Maud, she
has neither savour nor salt,

But a cold and clear-cut face, as I
found when her carriage past,

Perfectly beautiful: let it be granted
her: where is the fault?

All that I saw (for her eyes were down-
cast, not to be seen)

Faultily faultless, icily regular, splen-
didly null,

Dead perfection, no more; nothing
more, if it had not been

For a chance of travel, a paleness, an
hour's defect of the rose,

Or an underlip, you may call it a little
too ripe, too full,

Or the least little delicate aquiline
curve in a sensitive nose,

From which I escaped heart-free,
with the least little touch of
spleen.

Cold and clear-cut face, why come
you so cruelly meek,
Breaking a slumber in which all
spleenful folly was drown'd,
Pale with the golden beam of an
eyelash dead on the cheek,
Passionless, pale, cold face, star-
sweet on a gloom profound;
Womanlike, taking revenge too deep
for a transient wrong
Done but in thought to your beauty,
and ever as pale as before
Growing and fading and growing upon
me without a sound,
Luminous, gemlike, ghostlike, death-
like, half the night long
Growing and fading and growing, till
I could bear it no more,
But arose, and all by myself in my
own dark garden ground,
Listening now to the tide in its
broad-flung ship-wrecking roar,
Now to the scream of a madden'd
beach dragg'd down by the wave,
Walk'd in a wintry wind by a ghastly
glimmer, and found
The shining daffodil dead, and Orion
low in his grave.

IV

A MILLION emeralds break from the
ruby-budded lime

In the little grove where I sit—ah,
wherefore cannot I be

Like things of the season gay, like
the bountiful season bland,

When the far-off sail is blown by the
breeze of a softer clime,

Half-lost in the liquid azure bloom of
a crescent of sea,

The silent sapphire-spangled mar-
riage ring of the land?

Below me, there, is the village, and
looks how quiet and small!

And yet bubbles o'er like a city, with
gossip, scandal, and spite;

And Jack on his ale-house bench has
as many lies as a Czar ;
And here on the landward side, by
a red rock, glimmers the Hall ;
And up in the high Hall-garden I see
her pass like a light ;
But sorrow seize me if ever that light
be my leading star !

III

When have I bow'd to her father,
the wrinkled head of the race ?
I met her to-day with her brother,
but not to her brother I bow'd ;
I bow'd to his lady-sister as she rode
by on the moor ;
But the fire of a foolish pride flash'd
over her beautiful face.
O child, you wrong your beauty,
believe it, in being so proud ;
Your father has wealth well-gotten,
and I am nameless and poor.

IV

I keep but a man and a maid, ever
ready to slander and steal ;
I know it, and smile a hard-set smile,
like a stoic, or like
A wiser epicurean, and let the world
have its way :
For nature is one with rapine, a harm
no preacher can heal ;
The Mayfly is torn by the swallow,
the sparrow spear'd by the
shrike,
And the whole little wood where I
sit is a world of plunder and
prey.

We are puppets, Man in his pride,
and Beauty fair in her flower ;
Do we move ourselves, or are moved
by an unseen hand at a game
That pushes us off from the board,
and others ever succeed ?
Ah yet, we cannot be kind to each
other here for an hour ;
We whisper, and hint, and chuckle,
and grin at a brother's shame ;
However we brave it out, we men
are a little breed.

VI

A monstrous eft was of old the Lord
and Master of Earth,
For him did his high sun flame, and
his river billowing ran,
And he felt himself in his force to be
Nature's crowning race.
As nine months go to the shaping an
infant ripe for his birth,
So many a million of ages have gone
to the making of man :
He now is first, but is he the last ? is
he not too base ?

The man of science himself is fonder
of glory, and vain,
An eye well-practised in nature, a
spirit bounded and poor ;
The passionate heart of the poet is
whirl'd into folly and vice.
I would not marvel at either, but
keep a temperate brain ;
For not to desire or admire, if a man
could learn it, were more
Than to walk all day like the sultan
of old in a garden of spice.

VIII

For the drift of the Maker is dark, an
Isis hid by the veil.
Who knows the ways of the world,
how God will bring them about ?
Our planet is one, the suns are many,
the world is wide.
Shall I weep if a Poland fall ? shall I
shriek if a Hungary fail ?
Or an infant civilisation be ruled
with rod or with knout ?
I have not made the world, and He
that made it will guide.

IX

Be mine a philosopher's life in the
quiet woodland ways,
Where if I cannot begaylet a passion-
less peace be my lot,
Far-off from the clamour of liars
belied in the hubbub of lies ;

From the long-neck'd geese of the
world that are ever hissing dis-
praise

Because their natures are little,
and, whether he heed it or not,
Where each man walks with his head
in a cloud of poisonous flies.

And most of all would I flee from the
cruel madness of love,

The honey of poison-flowers and all
the measureless ill.

Ah Maud, you milkwhite fawn, you
are all unmeet for a wife.

Your mother is mute in her grave as
her image is marble above;

Your father is ever in London, you
wander about at your will;

You have but fed on the roses, and
lain in the lilies of life.

A VOICE by the cedar tree,
In the meadow under the Hall!
She is singing an air that is known to
me,

A passionate ballad gallant and gay,
A martial song like a trumpet's call!
Singing alone in the morning of life,
In the happy morning of life and of
May,

Singing of men that in battle array,
Ready in heart and ready in hand,
March with banner and bugle and
fife

To the death, for their native land.

Maud with her exquisite face,
And wild voice pealing up to the
sunny sky,

And feet like sunny gems on an
English green,

Maud in the light of her youth and
her grace,

Singing of Death, and of Honour
that cannot die,

Till I well could weep for a time so
sordid and mean,

And myself so languid and base.

Silence, beautiful voice!

Be still, for you only trouble the mind
With a joy in which I cannot rejoice,
A glory I shall not find.

Still! I will hear you no more,
For your sweetness hardly leaves me
a choice

But to move to the meadow and fall
before

Her feet on the meadow grass, and
adore,

Not her, who is neither courtly nor
kind,

Not her, not her, but a voice.

VI

I

MORNING arises stormy and pale,
No sun, but a wannish glare
In fold upon fold of hueless cloud,
And the budded peaks of the wood
are bow'd

Caught and cuff'd by the gale:
I had fancied it would be fair.

Whom but Maud should I meet
Last night, when the sunset burn'd
On the blossom'd gable-ends
At the head of the village street,
Whom but Maud should I meet?
And she touch'd my hand with a
smile so sweet

She made me divine amends
For a courtesy not return'd.

And thus a delicate spark
Of glowing and growing light
Thro' the livelong hours of the dark
Kept itself warm in the heart of my
dreams,

Ready to burst in a colour'd flame;
Till at last when the morning came
In a cloud, it faded, and seems
But an ashen-gray delight.

What if with her sunny hair,
And smile as sunny as cold,
She meant to weave me a snare
Of some coquettish deceit,
Cleopatra-like as of old
To entangle me when we met,
To have her lion roll in a silken net
And fawn at a victor's feet.

Ah, what shall I be at fifty
Should Nature keep me alive,
If I find the world so bitter
When I am but twenty-five?
Yet, if she were not a cheat,
If Maud were all that she seem'd,
And her smile were all that I dream'd,
Then the world were not so bitter
But a smile could make it sweet.

VI

What if tho' her eye seem'd full
Of a kind intent to me,
What if that dandy-despot, he,
That jewell'd mass of millinery,
That oil'd and curl'd Assyrian Bull
Smelling of musk and of insolence,
Her brother, from whom I keep aloof,
Who wants the finer politic sense
To mask, tho' but in his own behoof,
With a glassy smile his brutal scorn—
What if he had told her yesternorn
How prettily for his own sweet sake
A face of tenderness might be feign'd,
And a moist mirage in desert eyes,
That so, when the rotten hustings
shake
In another month to his brazen lies,
A wretched vote may be gain'd.

VII

For a raven ever croaks, at my side,
Keep watch and ward, keep watch
and ward,
Or thou wilt prove their tool.
Yea too, myself from myself I guard,
For often a man's own angry pride
Is cap and bells for a fool.

Perhaps the smile and tender tone,
Came out of her pitying womanhood,
For am I not, am I not, here alone
So many a summer since she died,
My mother, who was so gentle and
good?

Living alone in an empty house,
Here half-hid in the gleaming wood,
Where I hear the dead at midday
moan,
And the shrieking rush of the wain-
scot mouse,
And my own sad name in corners
cried,
When the shiver of dancing leaves is
thrown
About its echoing chambers wide,
Till a morbid hate and horror have
grown
Of a world in which I have hardly
mixt,
And a morbid eating lichen fixt
On a heart half-turn'd to stone.

IX

O heart of stone, are you flesh, and
caught
By that you swore to withstand?
For what was it else within me
wrought
But, I fear, the new strong wine of
love,
That made my tongue so stammer
and trip
When I saw the treasured splendour,
her hand,
Come sliding out of her sacred glove,
And the sunlight broke from her lip?

I have play'd with her when a child;
She remembers it now we meet.
Ah well, well, well, I may be beguiled
By some coquettish deceit.
Yet, if she were not a cheat,
If Maud were all that she seem'd,
And her smile had all that I dream'd,
Then the world were not so bitter
But a smile could make it sweet.

VII

I

DID I hear it half in a doze
 Long since, I know not where?
 Did I dream it an hour ago,
 When asleep in this arm-chair?

Men were drinking together,
 Drinking and talking of me;
 "Well, if it prove a girl, the boy
 Will have plenty: so let it be."

And riding at set of day
 Over the dark moor land,
 Rapidly riding far away,
 She waved to me with her hand.
 There were two at her side,
 Something flash'd in the sun,
 Down by the hill I saw them ride,
 In a moment they were gone:
 Like a sudden spark
 Struck vainly in the night,
 And back returns the dark
 With no more hope of light.

X

Is it an echo of something
 Read with a boy's delight,
 Viziers nodding together
 In some Arabian night?

IV

Strange, that I hear two men,
 Somewhere, talking of me;
 "Well, if it prove a girl, my boy
 Will have plenty: so let it be."

VIII

SHE came to the village church,
 And sat by a pillar alone;
 An angel watching an urn
 Wept over her, carved in stone;
 And once, but once, she lifted her
 eyes,
 And suddenly, sweetly, strangely
 blush'd
 To find they were met by my own;
 And suddenly, sweetly, my heart
 beat stronger
 And thicker, until I heard no longer
 The snowy-banded dilettante,
 Delicate-handed priest intone;
 And thought, is it pride, and mused
 and sigh'd
 "No surely, now it cannot be pride."

SICK, am I sick of a jealous dread?
 Was not one of the two at her side
 This new-made lord, whose splendour
 plucks
 The slavish hat from the villager's
 head?
 Whose old grand-father has lately
 died,
 Gone to a blacker pit, for whom
 Grimy nakedness dragging his trucks
 And laying his trams in a poison'd
 gloom
 Wrought, till he crept from a gutted
 mine
 Master of half a servile shire,
 And left his coal all turn'd into gold
 To a grandson, first of his noble
 line,
 Rich in the grace all women desire,
 Strong in the power that all men
 adore,
 And simper and set their voices lower,
 And soften as if to a girl, and hold
 Awe-stricken breaths at a work
 divine,
 Seeing his gewgaw castle shine,
 New as his title, built last year,
 There amid perky larches and pine,
 And over the sullen-purple moor
 (Look at it) pricking a cockney ear.

IX

I WAS walking a mile,
 More than a mile from the shore,
 The sun look'd out with a smile
 Betwixt the cloud and the moor,

II

What, has he found my jewel out?
 For one of the two that rode at her
 side
 Bound for the Hall, I am sure was he:

Bound for the Hall, and I think for a bride.	She would not do herself this great wrong,
Blithe would her brother's acceptance be.	To take a wanton dissolute boy For a man and leader of men.
Maud could be gracious too, no doubt, To a lord, a captain, a padded shape, A bought commission, a waxen face, A rabbit mouth that is ever agape— Bought? what is it he cannot buy? And therefore splenetic, personal, base,	Ah God, for a man with heart, head, hand, Like some of the simple great ones gone
A wounded thing with a rancorous cry,	For ever and ever by,
At war with myself and a wretched race,	One still strong man in a blatant land,
Sick, sick to the heart of life, am I.	Whatever they call him, what care I, Aristocrat, democrat, autocrat—one Who can rule and dare not lie.

Last week came one to the county town, To preach our poor little army down, And play the game of the despot kings, Tho' the state has done it and thrice as well:	And ah for a man to arise in me, That the man I am may cease to be!
This broad-brimm'd hawker of holy things, Whose ear is cramm'd with his cotton, and rings Even in dreams to the chink of his pence, This huckster put down war! can he tell	XI I
Whether war be a cause or a conse- quence?	O LET the solid ground Not fail beneath my feet Before my life has found What some have found so sweet;
Put down the passions that make earth Hell!	Then let come what come may, What matter if I go mad, I shall have had my day.
Down with ambition, avarice, pride, Jealousy, down! cut off from the mind	Let the sweet heavens endure, Not close and darken above me Before I am quite quite sure That there is one to love me;
The bitter springs of anger and fear; Down too, down at your own fireside, With the evil tongue and the evil ear, For each is at war with mankind.	Then let come what come may To a life that has been so sad, I shall have had my day.

XII

IV

I wish I could hear again The chivalrous battle-song That she warbled alone in her joy! I might persuade myself then	BIRDS in the high Hall-garden When twilight was falling, Maud, Maud, Maud, Maud, They were crying and calling.
---	---

Where was Maud ? in our wood ;
 And I, who else, was with her,
 Gathering woodland lilies,
 Myriads blow together.

III

Birds in our wood sang
 Ringing thro' the vallies,
 Maud is here, here, here
 In among the lilies.

I kiss'd her slender hand,
 She took the kiss sedately ;
 Maud is not seventeen,
 But she is tall and stately.

I to cry out on pride
 Who have won her favour !
 O Maud were sure of Heaven
 If lowliness could save her.

VI

I know the way she went
 Home with her maiden posy,
 For her feet have touch'd the meadows
 And left the daisies rosy.

VII

Birds in the high Hall-garden
 Were crying and calling to her,
 Where is Maud, Maud, Maud,
 One is come to woo her.
 Look, a horse at the door,
 And little King Charley snarling,
 Go back, my lord, across the moor,
 You are not her darling.

XIII

I

SCORN'D, to be scorn'd by one that
 I scorn,
 Is that a matter to make me fret ?
 That a calamity hard to be borne ?
 Well, he may live to hate me yet.

Fool that I am to be vex't with his
 pride !

I past him, I was crossing his lands ;
 He stood on the path a little aside ;
 His face, as I grant, in spite of spite,
 Has a broad-blown comeliness, red
 and white,

And six feet two, as I think, he
 stands ;

But his essences turn'd the live air
 sick,

And barbarous opulence jewel-thick
 Sunn'd itself on his breast and his
 hands.

Who shall call me ungentle, unfair,
 I long'd so heartily then and there
 To give him the grasp of fellowship ;
 But while I past he was humming
 an air,

Stopt, and then with a riding whip
 Leisurely tapping a glossy boot,
 And curving a contumelious lip,
 Gorgonised me from head to foot
 With a stony British stare.

III

Why sits he here in his father's chair ?
 That old man never comes to his
 place :

Shall I believe him ashamed to be
 seen ?

For only once, in the village street,
 Last year, I caught a glimpse of his
 face,

A gray old wolf and a lean.
 Scarcely, now, would I call him a
 cheat ;

For then, perhaps, as a child of deceit,
 She might by a true descent be untrue ;
 And Maud is as true as Maud is sweet :
 Tho' I fancy her sweetness only due
 To the sweeter blood by the other
 side ;

Her mother has been a thing com-
 plete,

However she came to be so allied.

And fair without, faithful within,
 Maud to him is nothing akin :
 Some peculiar mystic grace

Made her only the child of her
 mother,
 And heap'd the whole inherited sin
 On that huge scapegoat of the race,
 All, all upon the brother.

Peace, angry spirit, and let him be !
 Has not his sister smiled on me ?

XIV

MAUD has a garden of roses
 And lilies fair on a lawn ;
 There she walks in her state,
 And tends upon bed and bower ;
 And thither I climb'd at dawn
 And stood by her garden-gate ;
 A lion ramps at the top,
 He is claspt by a passion-flower.

Maud's own little oak-room
 (Which Maud, like a precious stone
 Set in the heart of the carved gloom,
 Lights with herself, when alone
 She sits by her music and books,
 And her brother lingers late
 With a roystering company) looks
 Upon Maud's own garden-gate :
 And I thought as I stood, if a hand,
 as white
 As ocean-foam in the moon, were laid
 On the hasp of the window, and my
 Delight
 Had a sudden desire, like a glorious
 ghost, to glide,
 Like a beam of the seventh Heaven,
 down to my side,
 There were but a step to be made.

The fancy flatter'd my mind,
 And again seem'd overbold ;
 Now I thought that she cared for me,
 Now I thought she was kind
 Only because she was cold.

T.P.W.

I heard no sound where I stood
 But the rivulet on from the lawn
 Running down to my own dark
 wood ;
 Or the voice of the long sea-wave as
 it swell'd
 Now and then in the dim-gray dawn ;
 But I look'd, and round, all round
 the house I beheld
 The death-white curtain drawn ;
 Felt a horror over me creep,
 Prickle my skin and catch my
 breath,
 Knew that the death-white curtain
 meant but sleep,
 Yet I shudder'd and thought like a
 fool of the sleep of death.

XV

So dark a mind within me dwells,
 And I make myself such evil cheer,
 That if I be dear to some one else,
 Then some one else may have much
 to fear ;
 But if I be dear to some one else,
 Then I should be to myself more
 dear.
 Shall I not take care of all that I
 think,
 Yea ev'n of wretched meat and drink,
 If I be dear,
 If I be dear to some one else.

XVI

THIS lump of earth has left his estate
 The lighter by the loss of his weight ;
 And so that he find what he went to
 seek,
 And fulsome Pleasure clog him, and
 drown
 His heart in the gross mud-honey of
 town,
 He may stay for a year who has gone
 for a week :
 But this is the day when I must speak,
 And I see my Oread coming down,
 O this is the day !
 O beautiful creature, what am I
 That I dare to look her way ;
 Think I may hold dominion sweet,

Lord of the pulse that is lord of her
breast,
And dream of her beauty with tender
dread,
From the delicate Arab arch of her
feet
To the grace that, bright and light
as the crest
Of a peacock, sits on her shining
head,
And she knows it not: O, if she
knew it,
To know her beauty might half undo
it.
I know it the one bright thing to save
My yet young life in the wilds of Time,
Perhaps from madness, perhaps from
crime,
Perhaps from a selfish grave.

Pass and blush the news
O'er the blowing ships.
Over blowing seas,
Over seas at rest,
Pass the happy news,
Blush it thro' the West;
Till the red man dance
By his red cedar tree,
And the red man's babe
Leap, beyond the sea.
Blush from West to East,
Blush from East to West,
Till the West is East,
Blush it thro' the West.
Rosy is the West,
Rosy is the South,
Roses are her cheeks,
And a rose her mouth.

XVIII

What, if she be fasten'd to this fool
lord,
Dare I bid her abide by her word?
Should I love her so well if she
Had given her word to a thing so
low?
Shall I love her as well if she
Can break her word were it even for
me?
I trust that it is not so.

I HAVE led her home, my love, my
only friend.
There is none like her, none.
And never yet so warmly ran my
blood
And sweetly, on and on
Calming itself to the long-wish'd-
for end,
Full to the banks, close on the
promised good.

Catch not my breath, O clamorous
heart,
Let not my tongue be a thrall to my
eye,
For I must tell her before we part,
I must tell her, or die.

XVII

Go not, happy day,
From the shining fields,
Go not, happy day,
Till the maiden yields.
Rosy is the West,
Rosy is the South,
Roses are her cheeks,
And a rose her mouth.
When the happy Yes
Falters from her lips,

None like her, none.
Just now the dry-tongued laurels'
pattering talk
Seem'd her light foot along the
garden walk,
And shook my heart to think she
comes once more;
But even then I heard her close the
door,
The gates of Heaven are closed, and
she is gone.

There is none like her, none.
Nor will be when our summers have
deceased.
O, art thou sighing for Lebanon

In the long breeze that streams to
 thy delicious East,
 Sighing for Lebanon,
 Dark cedar, tho' thy limbs have here
 increased,
 Upon a pastoral slope as fair,
 And looking to the South, and fed
 With honey'd rain and delicate air,
 And haunted by the starry head
 Of her whose gentle will has changed
 my fate,
 And made my life a perfumed altar-
 flame ;
 And over whom thy darkness must
 have spread
 With such delight as theirs of old,
 thy great
 Forefathers of the thornless garden,
 there
 Shadowing the snow-limb'd Eve from
 whom she came.

Here will I lie, while these long
 branches sway,
 And you fair stars that crown a happy
 day
 Go in and out as if at merry play,
 Who am no more so all forlorn,
 As when it seem'd far better to be
 born
 To labour and the mattock-harden'd
 hand,
 Than nursed at ease and brought to
 understand
 A sad astrology, the boundless plan
 That makes you tyrants in your iron
 skies,
 Innumerable, pitiless, passionless eyes,
 Cold fires, yet with power to burn
 and brand
 His nothingness into man.

But now shine on, and what care I,
 Who in this stormy gulf have found
 a pearl
 The countercharm of space and
 hollow sky,
 And do accept my madness, and
 would die
 To save from some slight shame one
 simple girl.

Would die ; for sullen-seeming Death
 may give
 More life to Love than is or ever was
 In our low world, where yet 'tis sweet
 to live.
 Let no one ask me how it came
 to pass ;
 It seems that I am happy, that to
 me
 A livelier emerald twinkles in the
 grass,
 A purer sapphire melts into the sea.

Not die ; but live a life of truest
 breath,
 And teach true life to fight with mor-
 tal wrongs.
 O, why should Love, like men in
 drinking-songs,
 Spice his fair banquet with the dust
 of death ?
 Make answer, Maud my bliss,
 Maud made my Maud by that long
 lover's kiss,
 Life of my life, wilt thou not answer
 this ?
 " The dusky strand of Death inwoven
 here
 With dear Love's tie, makes Love
 himself more dear "

Is that enchanted moan only the
 swell
 Of the long waves that roll in yonder
 bay ?
 And hark the clock within, the silver
 knell
 Of twelve sweet hours that past in
 bridal white,
 And died to live, long as my pulses
 play ;
 But now by this my love has closed
 her sight
 And given false death her hand, and
 stol'n away
 To dreamful wastes where footless
 fancies dwell
 Among the fragments of the golden
 day.

May nothing there her maiden grace
affright!
Dear heart, I feel with thee the
drowsy spell.
My bride to be, my evermore delight
My own heart's heart and ownest own
farewell;
It is but for a little space I go
And ye meanwhile far over moor and
fell
Beat to the noiseless music of the
night!
Has our whole earth gone nearer to
the glow
Of your soft splendours that you look
so bright?
I have climb'd nearer out of lonely
Hell.
Beat, happy stars, timing with things
below,
Beat with my heart more blest than
heart can tell,
Blest, but for some dark undercurrent
woe
That seems to draw—but it shall not
be so:
Let all be well, be well.

XIX

HER brother is coming back to-night,
Breaking up my dream of delight.

My dream? do I dream of bliss?
I have walk'd awake with Truth.
O when did a morning shine
So rich in atonement as this
For my dark-dawning youth,
Darken'd watching a mother decline
And that dead man at her heart and
mine:
For who was left to watch her but I?
Yet so did I let my freshness die.

I trust that I did not talk
To gentle Maud in our walk
(For often in lonely wanderings
I have cursed him even to lifeless
things)

But I trust that I did not talk,
Not touch on her father's sin:
I am sure I did but speak
Of my mother's faded cheek
When it slowly grew so thin,
That I felt she was slowly dying
Vext with lawyers and harass'd with
debt:

For how often I caught her with eyes
all wet,
Shaking her head at her son and
sighing

A world of trouble within!

And Maud too, Maud was moved
To speak of the mother she loved
As one scarce less forlorn,
Dying abroad and it seems apart
From him who had ceased to share
her heart,
And ever mourning over the feud,
The household Fury sprinkled with
blood

By which our houses are torn:
How strange was what she said,
When only Maud and the brother
Hung over her dying bed—
That Maud's dark father and mine
Had bound us one to the other,
Betrothed us over their wine,
On the day when Maud was born;
Seal'd her mine from her first sweet
breath.

Mine, mine by a right, from birth till
death,

Mine, mine—our fathers have sworn.

But the true blood spilt had in it a
heat

To dissolve the precious seal on a
bond,

That, if left uncancell'd, had been so
sweet:

And none of us thought of a some-
thing beyond,

A desire that awoke in the heart of
the child,

As it were a duty done to the tomb,
To be friends for her sake, to be
reconciled;

And I was cursing them and my doom,

And letting a dangerous thought
 run wild
 While often abroad in the fragrant
 gloom
 Of foreign churches—I see her there,
 Bright English lily, breathing a
 prayer
 To be friends, to be reconciled !

VI

But then what a flint is he !
 Abroad, at Florence, at Rome,
 I find whenever she touch'd on me
 This brother had laugh'd her down,
 And at last, when each came home,
 He had darken'd into a frown,
 Chid her, and forbid her to speak
 To me, her friend of the years before ;
 And this was what had reddened her
 cheek
 When I bow'd to her on the moor.

VII

Yet Maud, altho' not blind
 To the faults of his heart and mind,
 I see she cannot but love him,
 And says he is rough but kind,
 And wishes me to approve him,
 And tells me, when she lay
 Sick once, with a fear of worse,
 That he left his wine and horses and
 play,
 Sat with her, read to her, night and
 day,
 And tended her like a nurse.

Kind ? but the deathbed desire
 Spurn'd by this heir of the liar—
 Rough but kind ? yet I know
 He has plotted against me in this,
 That he plots against me still.
 Kind to Maud ? that were not amiss.
 Well, rough but kind ; why, let it
 be so :
 For shall not Maud have her will ?

For, Maud, so tender and true,
 As long as my life endures
 I feel I shall owe you a debt,
 That I never can hope to pay ;

So now I have sworn to bury
 All this dead body of hate,
 I feel so free and so clear
 By the loss of that dead weight,
 That I should grow light-headed, I
 fear,
 Fantastically merry ;
 But that her brother comes, like a
 blight
 On my fresh hope, to the Hall
 to-night.

XX

STRANGE, that I felt so gay,
 Strange, that I tried to-day
 To beguile her melancholy ;
 The Sultan, as we name him,—
 She did not wish to blame him—
 But he vexed her and perplexed her
 With his worldly talk and folly :
 Was it gentle to reprove her
 For stealing out of view
 From a little lazy lover
 Who but claims her as his due ?
 Or for chilling his caresses
 By the coldness of her manners,
 Nay, the plainness of her dresses ?
 Now I know her but in two,
 Nor can pronounce upon it
 If one should ask me whether
 The habit, hat, and feather,
 Or the frock and gipsy bonnet
 Be the neater and completer ;
 For nothing can be sweeter
 Than maiden Maud in either.

But to-morrow, if we live,
 Our ponderous squire will give
 A grand political dinner
 To half the squirelings near ;

And Maud will wear her jewels,
And the bird of prey will hover,
And the titmouse hope to win her
With his chirrup at her ear.

Come into the garden, Maud,
I am here at the gate alone;
And the woodbine spices are wafted
abroad,
And the musk of the roses blown.

A grand political dinner
To the men of many acres,
A gathering of the Tory,
A dinner and then a dance
For the maids and marriage-makers,
And every eye but mine will glance
At Maud in all her glory.

IV

For I am not invited,
But, with the Sultan's pardon,
I am all as well delighted,
For I know her own rose-garden,
And mean to linger in it
Till the dancing will be over;
And then, oh then, come out to me
For a minute, but for a minute,
Come out to your own true lover,
That your true lover may see
Your glory also, and render
All homage to his own darling,
Queen Maud in all her splendour.

XXI

RIVULET crossing my ground,
And bringing me down from the Hall
This garden-rose that I found,
Forgetful of Maud and me,
And lost in trouble and moving
round

Here at the head of a tinkling fall,
And trying to pass to the sea;
O Rivulet, born at the Hall,
My Maud has sent it by thee
(If I read her sweet will right)
On a blushing mission to me,
Saying in odour and colour, "Ah,
be
Among the roses to-night."

XXII

I

COME into the garden, Maud,
For the black bat, night, has flown.

For a breeze of morning moves,
And the planet of Love is on high,
Beginning to faint in the light that
she loves
On a bed of daffodil sky,
To faint in the light of the sun she
loves,
To faint in his light, and to die.

III

All night have the roses heard
The flute, violin, bassoon;
All night has the casement jessamine
stirr'd
To the dancers dancing in tune;
Till a silence fell with the waking
bird,
And a hush with the setting moon.

IV

I said to the lily, "There is but one
With whom she has heart to be
gay.
When will the dancers leave her
alone?
She is weary of dance and play."
Now half to the setting moon are
gone,
And half to the rising day;
Low on the sand and loud on the
stone
The last wheel echoes away.

I said to the rose, "The brief night
goes
In babble and revel and wine.
O young lord-lover, what sighs are
those,
For one that will never be thine?
But mine, but mine," so I sware to
the rose,
"For ever and ever, mine."

And the soul of the rose went into
my blood,
As the music clash'd in the hall;
And long by the garden lake I stood,
For I heard your rivulet fall
From the lake to the meadow and
on to the wood,
Our wood, that is dearer than all;

She is coming, my dove, my dear;
She is coming, my life, my fate;
The red rose cries, "She is near, she
is near;"
And the white rose weeps, "She
is late;"
The larkspur listens, "I hear, I hear;"
And the lily whispers, "I wait."

XI

From the meadow your walks have
left so sweet
That whenever a March-wind
sighs
He sets the jewel-print of your feet
In violets blue as your eyes,
To the woody hollows in which we
meet
And the valleys of Paradise.

She is coming, my own, my sweet;
Were it ever so airy a tread,
My heart would hear her and beat,
Were it earth in an earthy bed;
My dust would hear her and beat,
Had I lain for a century dead;
Would start and tremble under her
feet,
And blossom in purple and red.

VIII

PART II

The slender acacia would not shake
One long milk-bloom on the tree;
The white lake-blossom fell into the
lake,
As the pimpernel dozed on the lea;
But the rose was awake all night for
your sake,
Knowing your promise to me;
The lilies and roses were all awake,
They sigh'd for the dawn and thee.

'THE fault was mine, the fault was
mine'—
Why am I sitting here so stunn'd and
still,
Plucking the harmless wild-flower on
the hill?—
It is this guilty hand!—
And there rises ever a passionate cry
From underneath in the darkening
land—
What is it, that has been done?
O dawn of Eden bright over earth
and sky,
The fires of Hell brake out of thy
rising sun,
The fires of Hell and of Hate;
For she, sweet soul, had hardly
spoken a word,
When her brother ran in his rage to
the gate,
He came with the babe-faced lord;
Heap'd on her terms of disgrace,
And while she wept, and I strove to
be cool,
He fiercely gave me the lie,

IX

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of
girls,
Come hither, the dances are
done,
In gloss of satin and glimmer of
pearls,
Queen lily and rose in one;
Shine out, little head, sunning over
with curls,
To the flowers, and be their sun.

There has fallen a splendid tear
From the passion-flower at the
gate.

Till I with as fierce an angerspoken,
And he struck me, madman, over the
face,

Struck me before the languid fool,
Who was gaping and grinning by :
Struck for himself an evil stroke ;
Wrought for his house an irredeem-
able woe ;

For front to front in an hour we
stood,

And a million horrible bellowing
echoes broke

From the red-ribb'd hollow behind
the wood,

And thunder'd up into Heaven the
Christless code,

That must have life for a blow.
Ever and ever afresh they seem'd
to grow.

Was it he lay there with a fading eye ?
" The fault was mine," he whisper'd,
" fly ! "

Then glided out of the joyous wood
The ghastly Wraith of one that I
know ;

And there rang on a sudden a passion-
ate cry,

A cry for a brother's blood :

It will ring in my heart and my ears,
till I die, till I die.

Is it gone ? my pulses beat—
What was it ? a lying trick of the
brain ?

Yet I thought I saw her stand,
A shadow there at my feet,
High over the shadowy land.
It is gone ; and the heavens fall in a
gentle rain,

When they should burst and drown
with deluging storms

The feeble vassals of wine and anger
and lust,

The little hearts that know not how
to forgive :

Arise, my God, and strike, for we
hold Thee just,

Strike dead the whole weak race of
venomous worms,

That sting each other here in the
dust ;

We are not worthy to live

II

I

SEE what a lovely shell,
Small and pure as a pearl,
Lying close to my foot,
Frail, but a work divine,
Made so fairly well
With delicate spire and whorl,
How exquisitely minute,
A miracle of design !

What is it ? a learned man
Could give it a clumsy name.
Let him name it who can,
The beauty would be the same.

The tiny cell is forlorn,
Void of the little living will
That made it stir on the shore.
Did he stand at the diamond door
Of his house in a rainbow frill ?
Did he push, when he was uncurl'd,
A golden foot or a fairy horn
Thro' his dim water-world ?

Slight, to be crush'd with a tap
Of my finger-nail on the sand,
Small, but a work divine,
Frail, but of force to withstand,
Year upon year, the shock
Of cataract seas that snap
The three-decker's oaken spire,
Athwart the ledges of rock,
Here on the Breton strand !

Breton, not Briton ; here
Like a shipwreck'd man on a coast
Of ancient fable and fear—
Plagued with a flitting to and fro,
A disease, a hard mechanic ghost
That never came from on high
Nor ever arose from below,
But only moves with the moving
eye,

Flying along the land and the main—
 Why should it look like Maud?
 Am I to be overawed
 By what I cannot but know
 Is a juggle born of the brain?

Back from the Breton coast,
 Sick of a nameless fear,
 Back to the dark sea-line
 Looking, thinking of all I have lost;
 An old song vexes my ear;
 But that of Lamech is mine.

VII

For years, a measureless ill,
 For years, for ever, to part—
 But she, she would love me still;
 And as long, O God, as she
 Have a grain of love for me,
 So long, no doubt, no doubt,
 Shall I nurse in my dark heart,
 However weary, a spark of will
 Not to be trampled out.

VIII

Strange, that the mind, when fraught
 With a passion so intense
 One would think that it well
 Might drown all life in the eye,—
 That it should, by being so over-
 wrought,
 Suddenly strike on a sharper sense
 For a shell, or a flower, little things
 Which else would have been past by!
 And now I remember, I,
 When he lay dying there,
 I noticed one of his many rings,
 (For he had many, poor worm) and
 thought
 It is his mother's hair.

IX

Who knows if he be dead?
 Whether I need have fled?
 Am I guilty of blood?
 However this may be,
 Comfort her, comfort her, all things
 good,
 While I am over the sea!

Let me and my passionate love go
 by,
 But speak to her all things holy and
 high,
 Whatever happen to me!
 Me and my harmful love go by;
 But come to her waking, find her
 asleep,
 Powers of the height, Powers of the
 deep,
 And comfort her tho' I die.

III

COURAGE, poor heart of stone!
 I will not ask thee why
 Thou canst not understand
 That thou art left for ever alone:
 Courage, poor stupid heart of stone.—
 Or if I ask thee why,
 Care not thou to reply:
 She is but dead, and the time is at
 hand
 When thou shalt more than die.

IV

O THAT 'twere possible
 After long grief and pain
 To find the arms of my true love
 Round me once again!

When I was wont to meet her
 In the silent woody places
 By the home that gave me birth,
 We stood tranced in long embraces
 Mixt with kisses sweeter sweeter
 Than any thing on earth.

III

A shadow flits before me,
 Not thou, but like to thee;
 Ah Christ, that it were possible
 For one short hour to see
 The souls we loved, that they might
 tell us
 What and where they be.

It leads me forth at evening,
 It lightly winds and steals
 In a cold white robe before me,
 When all my spirit reels
 At the shouts, the leagues of lights,
 And the roaring of the wheels.

Half the night I waste in sighs,
 Half in dreams I sorrow after
 The delight of early skies ;
 In a wakeful doze I sorrow
 For the hand, the lips, the eyes,
 For the meeting of the morrow,
 The delight of happy laughter,
 The delight of low replies.

'Tis a morning pure and sweet,
 And a dewy splendour falls
 On the little flower that clings
 To the turrets and the walls ;
 'Tis a morning pure and sweet
 And the light and shadow fleet ;
 She is walking in the meadow,
 And the woodland echo rings ;
 In a moment we shall meet ;
 She is singing in the meadow,
 And the rivulet at her feet
 Ripples on in light and shadow
 To the ballad that she sings.

VII

Do I hear her sing as of old,
 My bird with the shining head,
 My own dove with the tender eye ?
 But there rings on a sudden a passion-
 ate cry,
 There is some one dying or dead,
 And a sullen thunder is roll'd ;
 For a tumult shakes the city,
 And I wake, my dream is fled ;
 In the shuddering dawn, behold,
 Without knowledge, without pity,
 By the curtains of my bed
 That abiding phantom cold.

VIII

Get thee hence, nor come again,
 Mix not memory with doubt,
 Pass, thou deathlike type of pain,
 Pass and cease to move about,
 'Tis the blot upon the brain
 That *will* show itself without.

IX

Then I rise, the eavedrops fall,
 And the yellow vapours choke
 The great city sounding wide ;
 The day comes, a dull red ball
 Wrapt in drifts of lurid smoke
 On the misty river-tide.

Thro' the hubbub of the market
 I steal, a wasted frame,
 It crosses here, it crosses there,
 Thro' all that crowd confused and
 loud,
 The shadow still the same ;
 And on my heavy eyelids
 My anguish hangs like shame.

XI

Alas for her that met me,
 That heard me softly call,
 Came glimmering thro' the laurels
 At the quiet evenfall,
 In the garden by the turrets
 Of the old manorial hall.

Would the happy spirit descend,
 From the realms of light and song,
 In the chamber or the street,
 As she looks among the blest,
 Should I fear to greet my friend
 Or to say " forgive the wrong,"
 Or to ask her, " take me, sweet,
 To the regions of thy rest ? "

But the broad light glares and beats,
 And the shadow flits and fleets

And will not let me be ;
 And I loathe the squares and streets,
 And the faces that one meets,
 Hearts with no love for me :
 Always I long to creep
 Into some still cavern deep,
 There to weep, and weep, and weep
 My whole soul out to thee.

DEAD, long dead,
 Long dead !
 And my heart is a handful of dust,
 And the wheels go over my head,
 And my bones are shaken with pain,
 For into a shallow grave they are
 thrust,
 Only a yard beneath the street,
 And the hoofs of the horses beat, beat,
 The hoofs of the horses beat,
 Beat into my scalp and my brain,
 With never an end to the stream of
 passing feet,
 Driving, hurrying, marrying, bury-
 ing,
 Clamour and rumble, and ringing
 and clatter,
 And here beneath it is all as bad,
 For I thought the dead had peace,
 but it is not so ;
 To have no peace in the grave, is
 that not sad ?
 But up and down and to and fro,
 Ever about me the dead men go ;
 And then to hear a dead man chatter
 Is enough to drive one mad.

Wretchedest age, since Time began,
 They cannot even bury a man ;
 And tho' we paid our tithes in the
 days that are gone,
 Not a bell was rung, not a prayer was
 read ;
 It is that which makes us loud in
 the world of the dead ;
 There is none that does his work, not
 one ;
 A touch of their office might have
 sufficed,

But the churchmen fain would kill
 their church,
 As the churches have kill'd their
 Christ.

III

See, there is one of us sobbing,
 No limit to his distress ;
 And another, a lord of all things,
 praying
 To his own great self, as I guess ;
 And another, a statesman there,
 betraying
 His party-secret, fool, to the press ;
 And yonder a vile physician, blabbing
 The case of his patient—all for what ?
 To tickle the maggot born in an
 empty head,
 And wheedle a world that loves him
 not,
 For it is but a world of the dead.

Nothing but idiot gabble !
 For the prophecy given of old
 And then not understood,
 Has come to pass as foretold ;
 Not let any man think for the public
 good,
 But babble, merely for babble.
 For I never whisper'd a private affair
 Within the hearing of cat or mouse,
 No, not to myself in the closet
 alone,
 But I heard it shouted at once from
 the top of the house ;
 Everything came to be known :
 Who told *him* we were there ?

Not that gray old wolf, for he came
 not back
 From the wilderness, full of wolves,
 where he used to lie ;
 He has gather'd the bones for his
 o'ergrown whelp to crack ;
 Crack them now for yourself, and
 howl, and die.

Prophet, curse me the blabbing lip,
 And curse me the British vermin,
 the rat ;
 I know not whether he came in the
 Hanover ship,
 But I know that he lies and listens
 mute
 In an ancient mansion's crannies and
 holes :
 Arsenic, arsenic, sure, would do it,
 Except that now we poison our babes,
 poor souls !
 It is all used up for that.

Tell him now : she is standing here
 at my head ;
 Not beautiful now, not even kind ;
 He may take her now ; for she never
 speaks her mind,
 But is ever the one thing silent here.
 She is not of us, as I divine ;
 She comes from another stiller world
 of the dead,
 Stiller, not fairer than mine.

VIII

But I know where a garden grows,
 Fairer than aught in the world beside,
 All made up of the lily and rose
 That blow by night, when the season
 is good,
 To the sound of dancing music and
 flutes :
 It is only flowers, they had no fruits,
 And I almost fear they are not roses,
 but blood ;
 For the keeper was one, so full of
 pride,
 He linkt a dead man there to a
 spectral bride ;
 For he, if he had not been a Sultan
 of brutes,
 Would he have that hole in his side ?

IX

But what will the old man say ?
 He laid a cruel snare in a pit

To catch a friend of mine one stormy
 day :
 Yet now I could even weep to think
 of it ;
 For what will the old man say
 When he comes to the second corpse
 in the pit ?

Friend, to be struck by the public foe,
 Then to strike him and lay him low,
 That were a public merit, far,
 Whatever the Quaker holds, from

But the red life spilt for a private
 blow—
 I swear to you, lawful and lawless war
 Are scarcely even akin.

O me, why have they not buried me
 deep enough ?
 Is it kind to have made me a grave so
 rough,
 Me, that was never a quiet sleeper ?
 Maybe still I am but half-dead ;
 Then I cannot be wholly dumb ;
 I will cry to the steps above my head,
 And somebody, surely, some kind
 heart will come
 To bury me, bury me
 Deeper, ever so little deeper.

VI

My life has crept so long on a broken
 wing
 Thro' cells of madness, haunts of
 horror and fear,
 That I come to be grateful at last
 for a little thing :
 My mood is changed, for it fell at a
 time of year
 When the face of night is fair on the
 dewy downs,
 And the shining daffodil dies, and
 the Charioteer
 And starry Gemini hang like glorious
 crowns

Over Orion's grave low down in the west,
That like a silent lightning under the stars
She seem'd to divide in a dream from a band of the blest,
And spoke of a hope for the world in the coming wars—
"And in that hope, dear soul, let trouble have rest,
Knowing I tarry for thee," and pointed to Mars
As he glow'd like a ruddy shield on the Lion's breast.

IV

Let it go or stay, so I wake to the higher aims
Of a land that has lost for a little her lust of gold,
And love of a peace that was full of wrongs and shames,
Horrible, hateful, monstrous, not to be told ;
And hail once more to the banner of battle unroll'd !
Tho' many a light shall darken, and many shall weep
For those that are crush'd in the clash of jarring claims,
Yet God's just wrath shall be wreak'd on a giant liar ;
And many a darkness into the light shall leap,
And shine in the sudden making of splendid names,
And noble thought be freer under the sun,
And the heart of a people beat with one desire ;
For the peace, that I deem'd no peace, is over and done,
And now by the side of the Black and the Baltic deep,
And deathful-grinning mouths of the fortress, flames
The blood-red blossom of war with a heart of fire.

And as months ran on and rumour of battle grew,

"It is time, it is time, O passionate heart," said I
(For I cleaved to a cause that I felt to be pure and true),
Let it flame or fade, and the war roll down like a wind,
We have proved we have hearts in a cause, we are noble still,

And myself have awaked, as it seems, to the better mind ;
 It is better to fight for the good, than to rail at the ill ;
 I have felt with my native land, I am one with my kind,
 I embrace the purpose of God, and the doom assign'd.

THE BROOK ;

" HERE, by this brook, we parted ;
 I to the East
 And he for Italy—too late—too late :
 One whom the strong sons of the world despise ;
 For lucky rhymes to him were scrip and share,
 And mellow metres more than cent for cent ;
 Nor could he understand how money breeds,
 Thought it a dead thing ; yet himself could make
 The thing that is not as the thing that is.
 O had he lived ! In our schoolbooks we say,
 Of those that held their heads above the crowd,
 They flourish'd then or then ; but life in him
 Could scarce be said to flourish, only touch'd
 On such a time as goes before the leaf,
 When all the wood stands in a mist of green,
 And nothing perfect : yet the brook he loved,
 For which, in branding summers of Bengal,
 Or ev'n the sweet half-English Neilgherry air,
 I panted, seems, as I re-listen to it,
 Prattling the primrose fancies of the boy,
 To me that loved him ; for " O brook," he says,

" O babbling brook," says Edmund in his rhyme,
 " Whence come you ? " and the brook, why not ? replies.

I come from haunts of coot and hern,
 I make a sudden sally
 And sparkle out among the fern,
 To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,
 Or slip between the ridges,
 By twenty thorps, a little town,
 And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow
 To join the brimming river,
 For men may come and men may go,
 But I go on for ever.

" Poor lad, he died at Florence,
 quite worn out,
 Travelling to Naples. There is Darnley bridge,
 It has more ivy ; there the river ;
 and there
 Stands Philip's farm where brook
 and river meet.

I chatter over stony ways,
 In little sharps and trebles,
 I bubble into eddying bays,
 I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret
 By many a field and fallow,
 And many a fairy foreland set
 With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
 To join the brimming river,
 For men may come and men may go,
 But I go on for ever.

" But Philip chatter'd more than brook or bird ;
 Old Philip ; all about the fields you caught
 His weary daylong chirping, like the dry
 High-elbow'd grigs that leap in summer grass.

I wind about, and in and out,
 With here a blossom sailing,
 And here and there a lusty trout,
 And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake
 Upon me, as I travel
 With many a silvery waterbreak
 Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along, and flow
 To join the brimming river,
 For men may come and men may go,
 But I go on for ever.

"O darling Katie Willows, his
 one child!
 A maiden of our century, yet most
 meek;
 A daughter of our meadows, yet not
 coarse;
 Straight, but as lissome as a hazel
 wand;
 Her eyes a bashful azure, and her
 hair
 In gloss and hue the chestnut, when
 the shell
 Divides threefold to show the fruit
 within.

"Sweet Katie, once I did her a
 good turn,
 Her and her far-off cousin and
 betrothed,
 James Willows, of one name and
 heart with her.
 For here I came, twenty years back
 —the week
 Before I parted with poor Edmund;
 crost
 By that old bridge which, half in
 ruins then,
 Still makes a hoary eyebrow for the
 gleam
 Beyond it, where the waters marry—
 crost,
 Whistling a random bar of Bonny
 Doon,
 And push'd at Philip's garden-gate.
 The gate,
 Half-parted from a weak and scolding
 hinge,
 Stuck; and he clamour'd from a
 casement, "run"
 To Katie somewhere in the walks
 below,
 "Run, Katie!" Katie never ran:
 she moved

To meet me, winding under woodbine
 bowers,
 A little flutter'd, with her eyelids
 down,
 Fresh apple-blossom, blushing for
 a boon.

"What was it? less of sentiment
 than sense
 Had Katie; not illiterate; nor of
 those
 Who dabbling in the fount of fictive
 tears,
 And nursed by mealy-mouth'd phi-
 lanthropies,
 Divorce the Feeling from her mate
 the Deed.

"She told me. She and James
 had quarrell'd. Why?
 What cause of quarrel? None, she
 said, no cause;
 James had no cause: but when I
 prest the cause,
 I learnt that James had flickering
 jealousies
 Which anger'd her. Who anger'd
 James? I said.
 But Katie snatch'd her eyes at once
 from mine,
 And sketching with her slender
 pointed foot
 Some figure like a wizard's penta-
 gram
 On garden gravel, let my query pass
 Unclaim'd, in flushing silence, till I
 ask'd
 If James were coming. "Coming
 every day,"
 She answer'd, "ever longing to ex-
 plain,
 But evermore her father came across
 With some long-winded tale, and
 broke him short;
 And James departed vex'd with him
 and her."
 How could I help her? "Would I—
 was it wrong?"
 (Claspt hands and that petitionary
 grace
 Of sweet seventeen subdued me ere
 she spoke)

" O would I take her father for one hour,
 For one half-hour, and let him talk to me ! "
 And even while she spoke, I saw where James
 Made toward us, like a wader in the surf,
 Beyond the brook, waist-deep in meadow-sweet.

" O Katie, what I suffer'd for your sake !
 For in I went, and call'd old Philip out
 To show the farm : full willingly he rose :
 He led me thro' the short sweet-smelling lanes
 Of his wheat-suburb, babbling as he went.
 He praised his land, his horses, his machines ;
 He praised his ploughs, his cows, his hogs, his dogs ;
 He praised his hens, his geese, his guinea-hens ;
 His pigeons, who in session on their roofs
 Approved him, bowing at their own deserts :
 Then from the plaintive mother's teat he took
 Her blind and shuddering puppies, naming each,
 And naming those, his friends, for whom they were :
 Then crost the common into Darnley chase
 To show Sir Arthur's deer. In copse and fern
 Twinkled the innumerable ear and tail.
 Then, seated on a serpent-rooted beech,
 He pointed out a pasturing colt, and said :
 " That was the four-year-old I sold the Squire."
 And there he told a long long-winded tale
 Of how the Squire had seen the colt at grass,

And how it was the thing his daughter wish'd,
 And how he sent the bailiff to the farm
 To learn the price, and what the price he ask'd,
 And how the bailiff swore that he was mad,
 But he stood firm ; and so the matter hung ;
 He gave them line : and five days after that
 He met the bailiff at the Golden Fleece,
 Who then and there had offer'd something more,
 But he stood firm ; and so the matter hung ;
 He knew the man ; the colt would fetch its price ;
 He gave them line : and how by chance at last
 (It might be May or April, he forgot,
 The last of April or the first of May)
 He found the bailiff riding by the farm,
 And, talking from the point, he drew him in,
 And there he mellow'd all his heart with ale,
 Until they closed a bargain, hand in hand.

" Then, while I breathed in sight of haven, he,
 Poor fellow, could he help it ? recommenced,
 And ran thro' all the coltish chronicle,
 Wild Will, Black Bess, Tantivy, Tallyho,
 Reform, White Rose, Bellerophon, the Jilt,
 Arbaces, and Phenomenon, and the rest,
 Till, not to die a listener, I arose,
 And with me Philip, talking still ; and so
 We turn'd our foreheads from the falling sun,
 And following our own shadows thrice as long
 As when they follow'd us from Philip's door,

Arrived, and found the sun of sweet content
 Of tender air made tremble in the hedge
 Re-risen in Katie's eyes, and all The fragile bindweed-bells and briony
 rings ;

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,
 I slide by hazel covers ;
 I move the sweet forget-me-nots
 That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,
 Among my skimming swallows ;
 I make the netted sunbeam dance
 Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars
 In brambly wildernesses ;
 I linger by my shingly bars ;
 I loiter round my cresses ;

And out again I curve and flow
 To join the brimming river,
 For men may come and men may go,
 But I go on for ever.

Yes, men may come and go ; and
 these are gone,

All gone. My dearest brother, Ed-
 mund, sleeps,

Not by the well-known stream and
 rustic spire,

But unfamiliar Arno, and the dome
 Of Brunelleschi ; sleeps in peace :
 and he,

Poor Philip, of all his lavish waste of
 words

Remains the lean P.W. on his tomb :
 I scraped the lichen from it : Katie
 walks

By the long wash of Australasian
 seas

Far off, and holds her head to other
 stars,

And breathes in converse seasons,
 All are gone."

So Lawrence Aylmer, seated on a
 stile

In the long hedge, and rolling in his
 mind

Old waifs of rhyme, and bowing o'er
 the brook

A tansured head in middle age for-
 lorn,

Mused, and was mute. On a sudden
 a low breath

And he look'd up. There stood a
 maiden near,
 Waiting to pass. In much amaze
 he stared

On eyes a bashful azure, and on hair
 In gloss and hue the chestnut, when
 the shell

Divides threefold to show the fruit
 within :

Then, wondering, ask'd her " Are
 you from the farm ? "

" Yes " answer'd she. " Pray stay
 a little : pardon me ;

What do they call you ? " " Katie."

" That were strange.
 What surname ? " " Willows."

" No ! " " That is my name."

" Indeed ! " and here he look'd so
 self-perplext,

That Katie laugh'd, and laughing
 blush'd, till he

Laugh'd also, but as one before he
 wakes,

Who feels a glimmering strangeness
 in his dream.

Then looking at her ; " Too happy,
 fresh and fair,

Too fresh and fair in our sad world's
 best bloom,

To be the ghost of one who bore
 your name

About these meadows, twenty years
 ago."

" Have you not heard ? " said
 Katie, " we came back.

We bought the farm we tenanted
 before.

Am I so like her ? so they said on
 board,

Sir, if you knew her in her English
 days,

My mother, as it seems you did, the
 days

That most she loves to talk of, come,
 with me.

My brother James is in the harvest-
 field :

But she—you will be welcome—O,
 come in ! "

THE LETTERS

STILL on the tower stood the vane,
 A black yew gloom'd the stagnant
 air,
 I peer'd athwart the chancel pane
 And saw the altar cold and bare.
 A clog of lead was round my feet,
 A band of pain across my brow ;
 " Cold altar, Heaven and earth shall
 meet
 Before you hear my marriage vow."

I turn'd and humm'd a bitter song
 That mock'd the wholesome human
 heart,
 And then we met in wrath and wrong,
 We met, but only meant to part.
 Full cold my greeting was and dry ;
 She faintly smiled, she hardly
 moved ;
 I saw with half-unconscious eye
 She wore the colours I approved.

III

She took the little ivory chest,
 With half a sigh she turn'd the
 key,
 Then raised her head with lips com-
 prest,
 And gave my letters back to me.
 And gave the trinkets and the rings,
 My gifts, when gifts of mine could
 please ;
 As looks a father on the things
 Of his dead son, I look'd on these.

She told me all her friends had said ;
 I raged against the public liar ;
 She talk'd as if her love were dead,
 But in my words were seeds of fire.
 " No more of love ; your sex is
 known :
 I never will be twice deceived.
 Henceforth I trust the man alone,
 The woman cannot be believed.

" Thro' slander, meanest spawn of
 Hell
 (And women's slander is the worst),
 And you, whom once I loved so well,
 Thro' you, my life will be accurst."
 I spoke with heart, and heat and
 force,
 I shook her breast with vague
 alarms—
 Like torrents from a mountain
 source
 We rush'd into each other's arms.

We parted : sweetly gleam'd the
 stars,
 And sweet the vapour-braided blue,
 Low breezes fann'd the belfry bars,
 As homeward by the church I
 drew.
 The very graves appear'd to smile,
 So fresh they rose in shadow'd
 swells ;
 " Dark porch," I said, " and silent
 aisle,
 There comes a sound of marriage
 bells."

ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE
DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

Bury the Great Duke
 With an empire's lamentation,
 Let us bury the Great Duke
 To the noise of the mourning of a
 mighty nation,
 Mourning when their leaders fall,
 Warriors carry the warrior's pall,
 And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.

Where shall we lay the man whom
 we deplore ?
 Here, in streaming London's central
 roar.
 Let the sound of those he wrought
 for,
 And the feet of those he fought for,
 Echo round his bones for evermore.

Lead out the pageant : sad and slow,
 As fits an universal woe,
 Let the long long procession go,
 And let the sorrowing crowd about
 it grow,
 And let the mournful martial music
 blow ;
 The last great Englishman is low.

Mourn, for to us he seems the last,
 Remembering all his greatness in the
 Past.
 No more in soldier fashion will he
 greet
 With lifted hand the gazer in the
 street.
 O friends, our chief state-oracle is
 mute :
 Mourn for the man of long-enduring
 blood,
 The statesman-warrior, moderate,
 resolute,
 Whole in himself, a common good.
 Mourn for the man of amplest
 influence,
 Yet clearest of ambitious crime,
 Our greatest yet with least pretence,
 Great in council and great in war,
 Foremost captain of his time,
 Rich in saving common-sense,
 And, as the greatest only are,
 In his simplicity sublime.
 O good gray head which all men
 knew,
 O voice from which their omens all
 men drew,
 O iron nerve to true occasion true,
 O fall'n at length that tower of
 strength
 Which stood four-square to all the
 winds that blew !
 Such was he whom we deplore.
 The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er.
 The great World-victor's victor will
 be seen no more.

All is over and done :
 Render thanks to the Giver,

England, for thy son.
 Let the bell be toll'd.
 Render thanks to the Giver,
 And render him to the mould.
 Under the cross of gold
 That shines over city and river,
 There he shall rest for ever
 Among the wise and the bold.
 Let the bell be toll'd :
 And a reverent people behold
 The towering car, the sable steeds :
 Bright let it be with its blazon'd
 deeds,
 Dark in its funeral fold.
 Let the bell be toll'd :
 And a deeper knell in the heart be
 knoll'd ;
 And the sound of the sorrowing
 anthem roll'd
 Thro' the dome of the golden cross ;
 And the volleying cannon thunder
 his loss ;
 He knew their voices of old.
 For many a time in many a clime
 His captain's-ear has heard them
 boom
 Bellowing victory, bellowing doom :
 When he with those deep voices
 wrought,
 Guarding realms and kings from
 shame ;
 With those deep voices our dead
 captain taught
 The tyrant, and asserts his claim
 In that dread sound to the great
 name,
 Which he has worn so pure of blame,
 In praise and in dispraise the same,
 A man of well-attemper'd frame.
 O civic muse, to such a name,
 To such a name for ages long,
 To such a name,
 Preserve a broad approach of fame,
 And ever-ringing avenues of song.

Who is he that cometh, like an
 honour'd guest,
 With banner and with music, with
 soldier and with priest,
 With a nation weeping, and breaking
 on my rest ?
 Mighty seaman, this is he
 Was great by land as thou by sea.

Thine island loves thee well, thou famous man,
 The greatest sailor since our world began.
 Now, to the roll of muffled drums,
 To thee the greatest soldier comes ;
 For this is he
 Was great by land as thou by sea ;
 His foes were thine ; he kept us free ;
 O give him welcome, this is he
 Worthy of our gorgeous rites,
 And worthy to be laid by thee ;
 For this is England's greatest son,
 He that gain'd a hundred fights,
 Nor ever lost an English gun ;
 This is he that far away
 Against the myriads of Assaye
 Clash'd with his fiery few and won ;
 And underneath another sun,
 Warring on a later day,
 Round affrighted Lisbon drew
 The treble works, the vast designs
 Of his labour'd rampart-lines,
 Where he greatly stood at bay,
 Whence he issued forth anew,
 And ever great and greater grew,
 Beating from the wasted vines
 Back to France her banded swarms,
 Back to France with countless blows,
 Till o'er the hills her eagles flew
 Beyond the Pyrenean pines,
 Follow'd up in valley and glen
 With blare of bugle, clamour of men,
 Roll of cannon and clash of arms,
 And England pouring on her foes.
 Such a war had such a close.
 Again their ravening eagle rose
 In anger, wheel'd on Europe-shadow-
 ing wings,
 And barking for the thrones of kings ;
 Till one that sought but Duty's iron
 crown
 On that loud sabbath shook the
 spoiler down ;
 A day of onsets of despair !
 Dash'd on every rocky square
 Their surging charges foam'd them-
 selves away ;
 Last, the Prussian trumpet blew ;
 Thro' the long-tormented air
 Heaven flash'd a sudden jubilant
 ray,
 And down we swept and charged and
 overthrew.

So great a soldier taught us there,
 What long-enduring hearts could do
 In that world's-earthquake, Water-
 loo !
 Mighty seaman, tender and true,
 And pure as he from taint of craven
 guile,
 O saviour of the silver-coasted isle,
 O shaker of the Baltic and the Nile,
 If aught of things that here befall
 Touch a spirit among things divine,
 If love of country move thee there
 at all,
 Be glad, because his bones are laid
 by thine !
 And thro' the centuries let a people's
 voice
 In full acclaim,
 A people's voice,
 The proof and echo of all human
 fame,
 A people's voice, when they rejoice
 At civic revel and pomp and game,
 Attest their great commander's claim
 With honour, honour, honour, hon-
 our to him,
 Eternal honour to his name.

A people's voice ! we are a people
 yet.
 Tho' all men else their nobler dreams
 forget,
 Confused by brainless mobs and law-
 less Powers ;
 Thank Him who isled us here, and
 roughly set
 His Briton in blown seas and storming
 showers,
 We have a voice, with which to pay
 the debt
 Of boundless love and reverence and
 regret
 To those great men who fought, and
 kept it ours.
 And keep it ours, O God, from brute
 control ;
 O Statesmen, guard us, guard the
 eye, the soul
 Of Europe, keep our noble England
 whole,

And save the one true seed of freedom
sown

Betwixt a people and their ancient
throne,

That sober freedom out of which
there springs

Our loyal passion for our temperate
kings ;

For, saving that, ye help to save
mankind

Till public wrong be crumbled into
dust,

And drill the raw world for the march
of mind,

Till crowds at length be sane and
crowns be just.

But wink no more in slothful over-
trust.

Remember him who led your
hosts ;

He bade you guard the sacred coasts.
Your cannons moulder on the sea-

ward wall ;
His voice is silent in your council-

hall
For ever ; and whatever tempests
lour

For ever silent ; even if they broke
in thunder, silent ; yet remember
all

He spoke among you, and the Man
who spoke ;

Who never sold the truth to serve
the hour,

Nor palter'd with Eternal God for
power ;

Who let the turbid streams of rumour
flow

Thro' either babbling world of high
and low ;

Whose life was work, whose language
rife

With rugged maxims hewn from
life ;

Who never spoke against a foe ;
Whose eighty winters freeze with
one rebuke

All great self-seekers trampling on
the right :

Truth-teller was our England's Al-
fred named ;

Truth-lover was our English Duke ;
Whatever record leap to light

He never shall be shamed.

-III-

Lo, the leader in these glorious wars
Now to glorious burial slowly borne,

Follow'd by the brave of other lands,
He, on whom from both her open

hands
Lavish Honour shower'd all her stars,
And affluent Fortune emptied all her

horn.
Yea, let all good things await
Him who cares not to be great,

But as he saves or serves the state.
Not once or twice in our rough island-

story,
The path of duty was the way to
glory :

He that walks it, only thirsting
For the right, and learns to deaden
Love of self, before his journey closes,

He shall find the stubborn thistle
bursting
Into glossy purples, which out-

red-
All voluptuous garden-roses.
Not once or twice in our fair

island-story,
The path of duty was the way to
glory :

He, that ever following her commands,
On with toil of heart and knees and
hands,

Thro' the long gorge to the far light
has won
His path upward, and prevail'd,

Shall find the toppling crags of
Duty scaled
Are close upon the shining table-

lands
To which our God Himself is moon and
sun.

Such was he : his work is done,
But while the races of mankind
endure,

Let his great example stand
Colossal, seen of every land,
And keep the soldier firm, the states-

man pure ;
Till in all lands and thro' all human
story

The path of duty be the way to
glory :

And let the land whose hearths he
saved from shame

For many and many an age proclaim
 At civic revel and pomp and game,
 And when the long-illuminated cities
 flame,
 Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,
 With honour, honour, honour, honour
 to him,
 Eternal honour to his name.

Peace, his triumph will be sung
 By some yet unmoulded tongue
 Far on in summers that we shall not
 see :

Peace, it is a day of pain
 For one about whose patriarchal
 knee

Late the little children clung :
 O peace, it is a day of pain
 For one, upon whose hand and heart
 and brain

Once the weight and fate of Europe
 hung.

Ours the pain, be his the gain !
 More than is of man's degree
 Must be with us, watching here
 At this, our great solemnity.
 Whom we see not we revere,
 We revere, and we refrain
 From talk of battles loud and vain,
 And brawling memories all too free
 For such a wise humility
 As befits a solemn fane :
 We revere, and while we hear
 The tides of Music's golden sea
 Setting toward eternity,
 Uplifted high in heart and hope are
 we,
 Until we doubt not that for one so
 true
 There must be other nobler work to
 do

Than when we fought at Waterloo,
 And Victor he must ever be.
 For tho' the Giant Ages heave the hill
 And break the shore, and evermore
 Make and break, and work their will ;
 Tho' world on world in myriad
 myriads roll

Round us, each with different powers,
 And other forms of life than ours,
 What know we greater than the
 soul ?

On God and Godlike men we build
 our trust.

Hush, the Dead March wails in the
 people's ears :

The dark crowd moves, and there are
 sobs and tears :

The black earth yawns : the mortal
 disappears ;

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust ;
 He is gone who seem'd so great.—

Gone ; but nothing can bereave him
 Of the force he made his own

Being here, and we believe him
 Something far advanced in State,

And that he wears a truer crown
 Than any wreath that man can
 weave him.

Speak no more of his renown,
 Lay your earthly fancies down,

And in the vast cathedral leave
 him.

God accept him, Christ receive him.
 1852.

THE DAISY

WRITTEN AT EDINBURGH.

O LOVE, what hours were thine and
 mine,

In lands of palm and southern pine ;
 In lands of palm, of orange-blos-
 som,

Of olive, aloe, and maize and vine.

What Roman strength Turbida show'd
 In ruin, by the mountain road ;

How like a gem, beneath, the
 city

Of little Monaco, basking, glow'd.

How richly down the rocky dell
 The torrent vineyard streaming fell

To meet the sun and sunny waters,
 That only heaved with a summer
 swell.

What slender campanili grew
 By bays, the peacock's neck in hue ;

Where, here and there, on sandy
 beaches

A milky-bell'd amaryllis blew.

How young Columbus seem'd to
rove,
Yet present in his natal grove,
Now watching high on mountain
cornice,
And steering, now, from a purple
cove,

Now pacing mute by ocean's rim ;
Till, in a narrow street and dim,
I stay'd the wheels at Cogoletto,
And drank, and loyally drank to
him,

Nor knew we well what pleased us
most,
Not the clipt palm of which they
boast ;

But distant colour, happy hamlet,
A moulder'd citadel on the coast,

Or tower, or high hill-convent, seen
A light amid its olives green ;
Or olive-hoary cape in ocean ;
Or rosy blossom in hot ravine,

Where oleanders flush'd the bed
Of silent torrents, gravel-spread ;
And, crossing, oft we saw the
glisten
Of ice, far up on a mountain head.

We loved that hall, tho' white and
cold,
Those niched shapes of noble mould,
A princely people's awful princes,
The grave, severe Genovese of old.

At Florence too what golden hours,
In those long galleries, were ours ;
What drives about the fresh Cascinè
Or walks in Boboli's ducal bowers.

In bright vignettes, and each com-
plete,
Of tower or duomo, sunny-sweet,
Or palace, how the city glitter'd.
Thro' cypress avenues, at our feet.

But when we crost the Lombard
plain
Remember what a plague of rain ;
Of rain at Reggio, rain at Parma ;
At Lodi, rain, Piacenza, rain.

And stern and sad (so rare the smiles
Of sunlight) look'd the Lombard
piles ;

Porch-pillars on the lion resting,
And sombre, old, colonnaded aisles.

O Milan, O the chanting quires,
The giant windows' blazon'd fires,
The height, the space, the gloom,
the glory !

A mount of marble, a hundred spires !

I climb'd the roofs at break of day ;
Sun-smitten Alps before me lay.

I stood among the silent statues,
And statued pinnacles, mute as they.

How faintly-flushed, how phantom-
fair,

Was Monte Rosa, hanging there
A thousand shadowy-pencill'd
valleys
And snowy dells in a golden air.

Remember how we came at last
To Como ; shower and storm and
blast
Had blown the lake beyond his
limit,
And all was flooded ; and how we
past

From Como, when the light was
gray,
And in my head, for half the day,
The rich Virgilian rustic measure
Of Lari Maxume, all the way,

Like ballad-burthen music, kept,
As on The Lariano crept
To that fair port below the castle
Of Queen Theodolind, where we
slept ;

Or hardly slept, but watch'd awake
A cypress in the moonlight shake,
The moonlight touching o'er a
terrace
One tall Agavè above the lake.

What more ? we took our last adieu,
And up the snowy Splügen drew,
But ere we reach'd the highest
summit
I pluck'd a daisy, I gave it you.

It told of England then to me,
And now it tells of Italy.

O love, we two shall go no longer
To lands of summer across the sea ;

So dear a life your arms enfold
Whose crying is a cry for gold :

Yet here to-night in this dark city,
When ill and weary, alone and cold,

I found, tho' crush'd to hard and
dry,

This nurseling of another sky
Still in the little book you lent me,
And where you tenderly laid it by :

And I forgot the clouded Forth,
The gloom that saddens Heaven and
Earth,

The bitter east, the misty summer
And gray metropolis of the North.

Perchance, to lull the throbs of pain,
Perchance, to charm a vacant brain,
Perchance, to dream you still
beside me,
My fancy fled to the South again.

TO THE REV. F. D. MAURICE

COME, when no graver cares employ,
God-father, come and see your boy :
Your presence will be sun in winter,
Making the little one leap for joy.

For, being of that honest few,
Who give the Fiend himself his due,
Should eighty-thousand college-
councils

Thunder "Anathema," friend, at
you ;

Should all our churchmen foam in
spite

At you, so careful of the right,
Yet one lay-hearth would give you
welcome

(Take it and come) to the Isle of
Wight ;

Where, far from noise and smoke of
town,

I watch the twilight falling brown
All round a careless-order'd garden
Close to the ridge of a noble down.

You'll have no scandal while you
dine,

But honest talk and wholesome wine,
And only hear the magpie gossip
Garrulous under a roof of pine :

For groves of pine on either hand,
To break the blast of winter, stand ;

And further on, the hoary Channel
Tumbles a breaker on chalk and
sand ;

Where, if below the milky steep
Some ship of battle slowly creep,
And on thro' zones of light and
shadow

Glimmer away to the lonely deep,

We might discuss the Northern sin
Which make a selfish war begin ;
Dispute the claims, arrange the
chances ;

Emperor, Ottoman, which shall win :

Or whether war's avenging rod
Shall lash all Europe into blood ;
Till you should turn to dearer
matters,

Dear to the man that is dear to God ;

How blest to help the slender store,
How mend the dwellings, of the poor ;
How gain in life, as life advances,
Valour and charity more and more.

Come, Maurice, come : the lawn as
yet

Is hoar with rime, or spongy-wet ;
But when the wreath of March has
blossom'd,

Crocus, anemone, violet,

Or later, pay one visit here,
For those are few we hold as dear ;
Nor pay but one, but come for
many,

Many and many a happy year.

January, 1854.

WILL

I

O WELL for him whose will is strong !
 He suffers, but he will not suffer
 long ;
 He suffers, but he cannot suffer
 wrong :
 For him nor moves the loud world's
 random mock,
 Nor all Calamity's hugest waves
 confound,
 Who seems a promontory of rock,
 That, compass'd round with turbu-
 lent sound,
 In middle ocean meets the surging
 shock,
 Tempest-buffed, citadel-crown'd.

II

But ill for him who, bettering not
 with time,
 Corrupts the strength of heaven-
 descended Will,
 And ever weaker grows thro' acted
 crime,
 Or seeming-genial venial fault,
 Recurring and suggesting still !
 He seems as one whose footsteps halt,
 Toiling in immeasurable sand,
 And o'er a weary sultry land,
 Far beneath a blazing vault,
 Sown in a wrinkle of the monstrous
 hill,
 The city sparkles like a grain of salt.

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT
BRIGADE

HALF a league, half a league,
 Half a league onward,
 All in the valley of Death
 Rode the six hundred.
 " Forward, the Light Brigade !
 " Charge for the guns ! " he said :
 Into the valley of Death
 Rode the six hundred.

" Forward, the Light Brigade ! "
 Was there a man dismay'd ?

Not tho' the soldier knew
 Some one had blunder'd :
 Their's not to make reply,
 Their's not to reason why,
 Their's but to do and die :
 Into the Valley of Death
 Rode the six hundred.

III

Cannon to right of them,
 Cannon to left of them,
 Cannon in front of them
 Volley'd and thunder'd ;
 Storm'd at with shot and shell,
 Boldly they rode and well,
 Into the jaws of Death,
 Into the mouth of Hell
 Rode the six hundred.

IV

Flash'd all their sabres bare,
 Flash'd as they turn'd in air,
 Sabring the gunners there,
 Charging an army, while
 All the world wonder'd :
 Plunged in the battery-smoke
 Right thro' the line they broke ;
 Cossack and Russian
 Reel'd from the sabre-stroke
 Shatter'd and sunder'd.
 Then they rode back, but not
 Not the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
 Cannon to left of them,
 Cannon behind them
 Volley'd and thunder'd ;
 Storm'd at with shot and shell,
 While horse and hero fell,
 They that had fought so well
 Came thro' the jaws of Death
 Back from the mouth of Hell,
 All that was left of them,
 Left of six hundred.

VI

When can their glory fade ?
 O the wild charge they made !
 All the world wonder'd.
 Honour the charge they made !
 Honour the Light Brigade,
 Noble six hundred !

IDYLLS OF THE KING

DEDICATION

THESE to His Memory—since he held
 them dear,
 Perchance as finding there uncon-
 sciously
 Some image of himself—I dedicate,
 I dedicate, I consecrate with tears—
 These Idylls.

And indeed He seems to me
 Scarce other than my own ideal
 knight,
 "Who revered his conscience as
 his king;
 Whose glory was, redressing human
 wrong;
 Who spake no slander, no, nor listen'd
 to it;
 Who loved one only and who clave
 to her—"—
 Her—over all whose realms to their
 last isle,
 Commingled with the gloom of
 imminent war,
 The shadow of His loss drew like
 eclipse,
 Darkening the world. We have lost
 him: he is gone:
 We know him now; all narrow
 jealousies
 Are silent; and we see him as he
 moved,
 How modest, kindly, all-accomplish'd,
 wise,
 With what sublime repression of him-
 self,
 And in what limits, and how tenderly;
 Not swaying to this faction or to
 that;
 Not making his high place the lawless
 perch

Of wing'd ambitions, nor a vantage-
 ground
 For pleasure; but thro' all this tract
 of years
 Wearing the white flower of a blame-
 less life,
 Before a thousand peering little-
 nesses,
 In that fierce light which beats upon
 a throne,
 And blackens every blot: for where
 is he,
 Who dares foreshadow for an only
 son
 A lovelier life, a more unstain'd, than
 his?
 Or how should England dreaming of
 his sons
 Hope more for these than some inheri-
 tance
 Of such a life, a heart, a mind as
 thine,
 Thou noble Father of her Kings to be,
 Laborious for her people and her
 poor—
 Voice in the rich dawn of an ampler
 day—
 Far-sighted summoner of War and
 Waste
 To fruitful strifes and rivalries of
 peace—
 Sweet nature gilded by the gracious
 gleam
 Of letters, dear to Science, dear to
 Art,
 Dear to thy land and ours, a Prince
 indeed,
 Beyond all titles, and a household
 name,
 Hereafter, thro' all times, Albert the
 Good.

Break not, O woman's-heart, but still endure ;
 Break not, for thou art Royal, but endure,
 Remembering all the beauty of that star
 Which shone so close beside Thee, that ye made
 One light together, but has past and leaves
 The Crown a lonely splendour.

May all love,
 His love, unseen but felt, o'er-shadow Thee,
 The love of all Thy sons encompass Thee,
 The love of all Thy daughters cherish Thee,
 The love of all Thy people comfort Thee,
 Till God's love set Thee at his side again !

ENID

THE brave Geraint, a knight of Arthur's court,
 A tributary prince of Devon, one
 Of that great order of the Table Round,
 Had married Enid, Yniol's only child,
 And loved her, as he loved the light of Heaven.
 And as the light of Heaven varies, now
 At sunrise, now at sunset, now by night
 With moon and trembling stars, so loved Geraint
 To make her beauty vary day by day,
 In crimsons and in purples and in gems.
 And Enid, but to please her husband's eye,
 Who first had found and loved her in a state
 Of broken fortunes, daily fronted him
 In some fresh splendour ; and the Queen herself,
 Grateful to Prince Geraint for service done,
 Loved her, and often with her own white hands
 Array'd and deck'd her, as the loveliest,
 Next after her own self, in all the court.
 And Enid loved the Queen, and with true heart
 Adored her, as the stateliest and the best
 And loveliest of all women upon earth.
 And seeing them so tender and so close,
 Long in their common love rejoiced Geraint.
 But when a rumour rose about the Queen,
 Touching her guilty love for Lancelot,
 Tho' yet there lived no proof, nor yet was heard
 The world's loud whisper breaking into storm,
 Not less Geraint believed it ; and there fell
 A horror on him, lest his gentle wife,
 Thro' that great tenderness for Guinevere,
 Had suffer'd, or should suffer any taint
 In nature : wherefore going to the king,
 He made this pretext, that his princedom lay
 Close on the borders of a territory,
 Wherein were bandit earls, and caitiff knights,
 Assassins, and all flyers from the hand
 Of Justice, and whatever loathes a law :
 And therefore, till the king himself should please
 To cleanse this common sewer of all his realm,
 He craved a fair permission to depart,
 And there defend his marches ; and the king
 Mused for a little on his plea, but, last,
 Allowing it, the Prince and Enid rode,
 And fifty knights rode with them, to the shores

Of Severn, and they past to their own
 land ;
 Where, thinking, that if ever yet was
 wife
 True to her lord, mine shall be so to
 me,
 He compass'd her with sweet observ-
 ances
 And worship, never leaving her, and
 grew
 Forgetful of his promise to the king,
 Forgetful of the falcon and the hunt,
 Forgetful of the tilt and tournament,
 Forgetful of his glory and his name,
 Forgetful of his principedom and its
 cares.
 And this forgetfulness was hateful to
 her.
 And by and by the people, when they
 met
 In twos and threes, or fuller com-
 panies,
 Began to scoff and jeer and babble of
 him
 As of a prince whose manhood was
 all gone,
 And molten down in mere uxorious-
 ness.
 And this she gather'd from the
 people's eyes :
 This too the women who attired her
 head,
 To please her, dwelling on his bound-
 less love,
 Told Enid, and they sadden'd her the
 more :
 And day by day she thought to tell
 Geraint,
 But could not out of bashful delicacy ;
 While he that watch'd her sadden,
 was the more
 Suspicious that her nature had a taint.

At last, it chanced that on a sum-
 mer morn
 (They sleeping each by other) the new
 sun
 Beat thro' the blindless casement of
 the room,
 And heated the strong warrior in his
 dreams ;
 Who, moving, cast the coverlet aside,
 And bared the knotted column of his
 throat,

The massive square of his heroic
 breast,
 And arms on which the standing
 muscle sloped,
 As slopes a wild brook o'er a little
 stone,
 Running too vehemently to break
 upon it.
 And Enid woke and sat beside the
 couch,
 Admiring him, and thought within
 herself,
 Was ever man so grandly made as
 he ?
 Then, like a shadow, past the people's
 talk
 And accusation of uxoriousness
 Across her mind, and bowing over
 him,
 Low to her own heart piteously she
 said :

" O noble breast and all-puissant
 arms,
 Am I the cause, I the poor cause that
 men
 Reproach you, saying all your force
 is gone ?
 I *am* the cause because I dare not
 speak
 And tell him what I think and what
 they say,
 And yet I hate that he should linger
 here ;
 I cannot love my lord and not his
 name.
 Far liefer had I gird his harness on
 him,
 And ride with him to battle and stand
 by,
 And watch his mightful hand striking
 great blows
 At caitiffs and at wrongers of the
 world.
 Far better were I laid in the dark
 earth,
 Not hearing any more his noble voice,
 Not to be folded more in these dear
 arms,
 And darken'd from the high light in
 his eyes,
 Than that my lord thro' me should
 suffer shame.

Am I so bold, and could I so stand
 by,
 And see my dear lord wounded in the
 strife,
 Or may be pierced to death before
 mine eyes,
 And yet not dare to tell him what I
 think,
 And how men slur him, saying all his
 force
 Is melted into mere effeminacy?
 O me, I fear that I am no true wife."

Half inwardly, half audibly she
 spoke,
 And the strong passion in her made
 her weep
 True tears upon his broad and naked
 breast,
 And these awoke him, and by great
 mischance
 He heard but fragments of her later
 words,
 And that she fear'd she was not a true
 wife.
 And then he thought, "In spite of
 all my care,
 For all my pains, poor man, for all
 my pains,
 She is not faithful to me, and I see
 her
 Weeping for some gay knight in
 Arthur's hall."
 Then tho' he loved and revered
 her too much
 To dream she could be guilty of foul
 act,
 Right thro' his manful breast darted
 the pang
 That makes a man, in the sweet face
 of her
 Whom he loves most, lonely and
 miserable.
 At this he hurl'd his huge limbs out
 of bed,
 And shook his drowsy squire awake
 and cried,
 "My charger and her palfrey," then
 to her,
 "I will ride forth into the wilderness;
 For tho' it seems my spurs are yet to
 win,
 I have not fall'n so low as some would
 wish,

And you, put on your worst and
 meanest dress
 And ride with me." And Enid ask'd,
 amazed,
 "If Enid errs, let Enid learn her
 fault."
 But he, "I charge you, ask not but
 obey."
 Then she bethought her of a faded
 silk,
 A faded mantle and a faded veil,
 And moving toward a cedarn cabinet,
 Wherein she kept them folded rever-
 ently
 With sprigs of summer laid between
 the folds,
 She took them, and array'd herself
 therein,
 Remembering when first he came on
 her
 Drest in that dress, and how he loved
 her in it,
 And all her foolish fears about the
 dress,
 And all his journey to her, as himself
 Had told her, and their coming to the
 court.

For Arthur on the Whitsuntide
 before
 Held court at old Caerleon upon Usk.
 There on a day, he sitting high in hall,
 Before him came a forester of Dean,
 Wet from the woods, with notice of a
 hart
 Taller than all his fellows, milky-
 white,
 First seen that day: these things he
 told the king.
 Then the good king gave order to let
 blow
 His horns for hunting on the morrow
 morn.
 And when the Queen petition'd for
 his leave
 To see the hunt, allow'd it easily.
 So with the morning all the court
 were gone.
 But Guinevere lay late into the morn,
 Lost in sweet dreams, and dreaming
 of her love
 For Lancelot, and forgetful of the
 hunt;

But rose at last, a single maiden with
 her,
 Took horse, and forded Usk, and
 gain'd the wood ;
 There, on a little knoll beside it,
 stay'd
 Waiting to hear the hounds ; but
 heard instead
 A sudden sound of hoofs, for Prince
 Geraint,
 Late also, wearing neither hunting-
 dress
 Nor weapon, save a golden-hilted
 brand,
 Came quickly flashing thro' the
 shallow ford
 Behind them, and so gallop'd up the
 knoll.
 A purple scarf, at either end whereof
 There swung an apple of the purest
 gold,
 Sway'd round about him, as he
 gallop'd up
 To join them, glancing like a dragon-
 fly
 In summer suit and silks of holiday.
 Low bow'd the tributary Prince, and
 she,
 Sweetly and stately, and with all
 grace
 Of womanhood and queenhood,
 answer'd him :
 " Late, late, Sir Prince," she said,
 " later than we ! "
 " Yea, noble Queen," he answer'd,
 " and so late
 That I but come like you to see the
 hunt,
 Not join it." " Therefore wait with
 me," she said ;
 " For on this little knoll, if anywhere,
 There is good chance that we shall
 hear the hounds :
 Here often they break covert at our
 feet."

And while they listen'd for the dis-
 tant hunt,
 And chiefly for the baying of Cavall,
 King Arthur's hound of deepest
 mouth, there rode
 Full slowly by a knight, lady, and
 dwarf ;

Whereof the dwarf lagg'd latest, and
 the knight
 Had visor up, and show'd a youthful
 face,
 Imperious, and of haughtiest linea-
 ments.
 And Guinevere, not mindful of his
 face
 In the king's hall, desired his name,
 and sent
 Her maiden to demand it of the
 dwarf ;
 Who being vicious, old and irritable,
 And doubling all his master's vice of
 pride,
 Made answer sharply that she should
 not know.
 " Then will I ask it of himself," she
 said.
 " Nay, by my faith, thou shalt not,"
 cried the dwarf ;
 " Thou art not worthy ev'n to speak
 of him ; "
 And when she put her horse toward
 the knight,
 Struck at her with his whip, and she
 return'd
 Indignant to the Queen ; at which
 Geraint
 Exclaiming, " Surely I will learn the
 name,"
 Made sharply to the dwarf, and ask'd
 it of him,
 Who answer'd as before ; and when
 the Prince
 Had put his horse in motion toward
 the knight,
 Struck at him with his whip, and cut
 his cheek.
 The Prince's blood spirted upon the
 scarf,
 Dyeing it ; and his quick, instinctive
 hand
 Caught at the hilt, as to abolish him :
 But he, from his exceeding manful-
 ness
 And pure nobility of temperament,
 Wroth to be wroth at such a worm,
 refrain'd
 From ev'n a word, and so returning
 said :
 " I will avenge this insult, noble
 Queen,

Done in your maiden's person to your-
self :
And I will track this vermin to their
earths :
For tho' I ride unarm'd, I do not
doubt
To find, at some place I shall come at,
arms
On loan, or else for pledge ; and,
being found,
Then will I fight him, and will break
his pride,
And on the third day, will again be
here,
So that I be not fall'n in fight. Fare-
well."

" Farewell, fair Prince," answer'd
the stately Queen.

" Be prosperous in this journey, as in
all ;

And may you light on all things that
you love,

And live to wed with her whom first
you love :

But ere you wed with any, bring your
bride,

And I, were she the daughter of a
king,

Yea, tho' she were a beggar from the
hedge,

Will clothe her for her bridals like the
sun."

And Prince Geraint, now thinking
that he heard

The noble hart at bay, now the far
horn,

A little vext at losing of the hunt,
A little at the vile occasion, rode,

By ups and downs, thro' many a
grassy glade

And valley, with fixt eye following
the three.

At last they issued from the world of
wood,

And climb'd upon a fair and even
ridge,

And show'd themselves against the
sky, and sank.

And thither came Geraint, and under-
neath

Beheld the long street of a little town
In a long valley, on one side of which,

White from the mason's hand, a for-
tress rose ;

And on one side a castle in decay,
Beyond a bridge that spann'd a dry

ravine :
And out of town and valley came a
noise

As of a broad brook o'er a shingly
bed

Brawling, or like a clamour of the
rooks

At distance, ere they settle for the
night.

And onward to the fortress rode
the three,

And enter'd, and were lost behind the
walls.

" So," thought Geraint, " I have
track'd him to his earth."

And down the long street riding
wearily,

Found every hostel full, and every-
where

Was hammer laid to hoof, and the
hot hiss

And bustling whistle of the youth who
scour'd

His master's armour ; and of such a
one

He ask'd, " What means the tumult
in the town ? "

Who told him, scouring still " The
sparrow-hawk ! "

Then riding close behind an ancient
churl,

Who, smitten by the dusty sloping
beam,

Went sweating underneath a sack of
corn,

Ask'd yet once more what meant the
hubbub here ?

Who answer'd gruffly, " Ugh ! the
sparrow-hawk."

Then riding further past an
armourer's

Who, with back turn'd, and bow'd
above his work,

Sat riveting a helmet on his knee,
He put the self-same query, but the
man

Not turning round, nor looking at him,
said :

"Friend, he that labours for the
 sparrow-hawk
 Has little time for idle questioners."
 Whereat Geraint flash'd into sudden
 spleen:
 "A thousand pips eat up your
 sparrow-hawk!
 Tits, wrens, and all wing'd nothings
 peck him dead!
 Ye think the rustic cackle of your
 bourg
 The murmur of the world! What is
 it to me?
 O wretched set of sparrows, one and
 all,
 Who pipe of nothing but of sparrow-
 hawks!
 Speak, if you be not like the rest,
 hawk-mad,
 Where can I get me harbourage for
 the night?
 And arms, arms, arms to fight my
 enemy? Speak!"
 At this the armourer turning all
 amazed
 And seeing one so gay in purple silks,
 Came forward with the helmet yet in
 hand
 And answer'd, "Pardon me, O
 stranger knight;
 We hold a tourney here to-morrow
 morn,
 And there is scanty time for half the
 work.
 Arms? truth! I know not: all are
 wanted here.
 Harbourage? truth, good truth, I
 know not, save,
 It may be, at Earl Yniol's, o'er the
 bridge
 Yonder." He spoke and fell to
 work again.

Then rode Geraint, a little spleen-
 ful yet,
 Across the bridge that spann'd the
 dry ravine.
 There musing sat the hoary-headed
 Earl,
 (His dress a suit of fray'd magnifi-
 cence,
 Once fit for feasts of ceremony) and
 said:

"Whither, fair son?" to whom
 Geraint replied,
 "O friend, I seek a harbourage for
 the night."
 Then Yniol, "Enter therefore and
 partake
 The slender entertainment of a house
 Once rich, now poor, but ever open-
 door'd."
 "Thanks, venerable friend," replied
 Geraint;
 "So that you do not serve me
 sparrow-hawks
 For supper, I will enter, I will eat
 With all the passion of a twelve hours'
 fast."
 Then sigh'd and smiled the hoary-
 headed Earl,
 And answer'd, "Graver cause than
 yours is mine
 To curse this hedgerow thief, the
 sparrow-hawk:
 But in, go in; for save yourself de-
 sire it,
 We will not touch upon him ev'n in
 jest."

Then rode Geraint into the castle
 court,
 His charger trampling many a prickly
 star
 Of sprouted thistle on the broken
 stones.
 He look'd and saw that all was
 ruinous.
 Here stood a shatter'd archway
 plumed with fern;
 And here had fall'n a great part of a
 tower,
 Whole, like a crag that tumbles from
 the cliff,
 And like a crag was gay with wilding
 flowers:
 And high above a piece of turret stair,
 Worn by the feet that now were silent,
 wound
 Bare to the sun, and monstrous ivy-
 stems
 Claspt the gray walls with hairy-
 fibred arms,
 And suck'd the joining of the stones,
 and look'd
 A knot, beneath, of snakes, aloft, a
 grove.

And while he waited in the castle court,
The voice of Enid, Yniol's daughter, rang
Clear thro' the open casement of the Hall,
Singing ; and as the sweet voice of a bird,
Heard by the lander in a lonely isle,
Moves him to think what kind of bird it is
That sings so delicately clear, and make
Conjecture of the plumage and the form ;
So the sweet voice of Enid moved Geraint ;
And made him like a man abroad at morn
When first the liquid note beloved of men
Comes flying over many a windy wave
To Britain, and in April suddenly
Breaks from a coppice gemm'd with green and red,
And he suspends his converse with a friend,
Or it may be the labour of his hands,
To think or say, " there is the nightingale ; "
So fared it with Geraint, who thought and said,
" Here, by God's grace, is the one voice for me."

It chanced the song that Enid sang was one
Of Fortune and her wheel, and Enid sang :

" Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel and lower the proud ;
Turn thy wild wheel thro' sunshine, storm, and cloud ;
Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor hate.

" Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel with smile or frown ;
With that wild wheel we go not up or down ;
Our hoard is little, but our hearts are great.

" Smile and we smile, the lords of many lands ;
Frown and we smile, the lords of our own hands ;
For man is man and master of his fate.

" Turn, turn thy wheel above the staring crowd ;
Thy wheel and thou are shadows in the cloud ;
Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor hate."

" Hark, by the bird's song you may learn the nest "
Said Yniol ; " Enter quickly." Entering then,
Right o'er a mount of newly-fallen stones,
The dusky-rafter'd many-cobweb'd Hall,
He found an ancient dame in dim brocade ;
And near her, like a blossom vermeil-white,
That lightly breaks a faded flower-sheath,
Moved the fair Enid, all in faded silk,
Her daughter. In a moment thought Geraint,
" Here by God's rood is the one maid for me."
But none spake word except the hoary Earl :
" Enid, the good knight's ' stands in the court"
Take him to stall, and and then
Go to the town and b wine ;
And we will make us . . . may.
Our hoard is little, but our hearts are great."

He spake : the Prince, as Enid past him, fain
To follow, strode a stride, but Yniol caught
His purple scarf, and held, and said " Forbear !
Rest ! the good house, tho' ruin'd, O my Son,

Endures not that her guest should
serve himself."

And reverencing the custom of the
house

Geraint, from utter courtesy, forbore.

So Enid took his charger to the
stall ;

And after went her way across the
bridge,

And reach'd the town, and while the
Prince and Earl

Yet spoke together, came again with
one,

A youth, that following with a costrel
bore

The means of goodly welcome, flesh
and wine.

And Enid brought sweet cakes to
make them cheer,

And in her veil enfolded, manchet
bread.

And then, because their hall must also
serve

For kitchen, boil'd the flesh, and
spread the board,

And stood behind, and waited on the
three.

And seeing her so sweet and service-
able,

Geraint had longing in him evermore
To stoop and kiss the tender little
thumb,

That crost the trencher as she laid it
down :

But after all had eaten, then Geraint,
For now the wine made summer in
his veins,

Let his eye rove in following, or rest
On Enid at her lowly handmaid-work,
Now here, now there, about the dusky
hall ;

Then suddenly address the hoary
Earl :

" Fair Host and Earl, I pray your
courtesy ;

This sparrow-hawk, what is he, tell
me of him.

His name ? but no, good faith, I will
not have it :

For if he be the knight whom late I
saw,

Ride into that new fortress by your
town,

White from the mason's hand, then
have I sworn

From his own lips to have it—I am
Geraint

Of Devon—for this morning when
the Queen

Sent her own maiden to demand the
name,

His dwarf, a vicious under-shapen
thing,

Struck at her with his whip, and she
return'd

Indignant to the Queen ; and then I
swore

That I would track this caitiff to his
hold,

And fight and break his pride, and
have it of him.

And all unarm'd I rode, and thought
to find

Arms in your town, where all the men
are mad ;

They take the rustic murmur of their
bourg

For the great wave that echoes round
the world ;

They would not hear me speak : but
if you know

Where I can light on arms, or if your-
self

Should have them, tell me, seeing I
have sworn

That I will break his pride and learn
his name,

Avenging this great insult done the
Queen."

Then cried Earl Yniol. " Art thou
he indeed,

Geraint, a name far-sounded among
men

For noble deeds ? and truly I, when
first

I saw you moving by me on the bridge,
Felt you were somewhat, yea and by
your state

And presence might have guess'd you
one of those

That eat in Arthur's hall at Camelot.
Nor speak I now from foolish flattery;

For this dear child hath often heard
me praise

Your feats of arms, and often when
 I paused
 Hath ask'd again, and ever loved to
 hear ;
 So grateful is the noise of noble deeds
 To noble hearts who see but acts of
 wrong :
 O never yet had woman such a pair
 Of suitors as this maiden ; first
 Limours,
 A creature wholly given to brawls and
 wine,
 Drunk even when he woo'd ; and be
 he dead
 I know not, but he past to the wild
 land.
 The second was your foe, the sparrow-
 hawk,
 My curse, my nephew—I will not let
 his name
 Slip from my lips if I can help it—he,
 When I that knew him fierce and
 turbulent
 Refused her to him, then his pride
 awoke ;
 And since the proud man often is the
 mean,
 He sow'd a slander in the common ear,
 Affirming that his father left him
 gold,
 And in my charge, which was not
 render'd to him ;
 Bribed with large promises the men
 who served
 About my person, the more easily
 Because my means were somewhat
 broken into
 Thro' open doors and hospitality ;
 Raised my own town against me in
 the night
 Before my Enid's birthday, sack'd my
 house ;
 From mine own earldom foully ousted
 me ;
 Built that new fort to overawe my
 friends,
 For truly there are those who love me
 yet ;
 And keeps me in this ruinous castle
 here,
 Where doubtless he would put me
 soon to death,
 But that his pride too much despises
 me :

And I myself sometimes despise my-
 self ;
 For I have let men be, and have their
 way ;
 Am much too gentle, have not used
 my power ;
 Nor know I whether I be very base
 Or very manful, whether very wise
 Or very foolish ; only this I know,
 That whatsoever evil happen to me,
 I seem to suffer nothing heart or
 limb,
 But can endure it all most patiently."

" Well said, true heart," replied
 Geraint, " but arms :
 That if, as I suppose, your nephew
 fights
 In next day's tourney I may break his
 pride."

And Yniol answer'd " Arms, in-
 deed, but old
 And rusty, old and rusty, Prince
 Geraint,
 Are mine, and therefore at your
 asking, yours.
 But in this tournament can no man
 tilt,
 Except the lady he loves best be
 there.
 Two forks are fixt into the meadow
 ground,
 And over these is laid a silver wand,
 And over that is placed the sparrow-
 hawk,
 The prize of beauty for the fairest
 there.
 And this, what knight soever be in
 field
 Lays claim to for the lady at his
 side,
 And tilts with my good nephew there-
 upon,
 Who being apt at arms and big of
 bone
 Has ever won it for the lady with him,
 And toppling over all antagonism
 Has earn'd himself the name of spar-
 row-hawk.
 But you, that have no lady, cannot
 fight."

To whom Geraint with eyes all
 bright replied,
 Leaning a little toward him, " Your
 leave !
 Let *me* lay lance in rest, O noble host,
 For this dear child, because I never
 saw,
 Tho' having seen all beauties of our
 time,
 Nor can see elsewhere, anything so
 fair.
 And if I fall her name will yet remain
 Untarnish'd as before ; but if I live,
 So aid me Heaven when at mine
 uttermost,
 As I will make her truly my true wife."

Then, howsoever patient, Yniol's
 heart
 Danced in his bosom, seeing better
 days.
 And looking round he saw not Enid
 there,
 (Who hearing her own name had slept
 away)
 But that old dame, to whom full
 tenderly
 And fondling all her hand in his he
 said,
 " Mother, a maiden is a tender thing,
 And best by her that bore her under-
 stood.
 Go thou to rest, but ere thou go to
 rest
 Tell her, and prove her heart toward
 the Prince."

So spake the kindly-hearted Earl,
 and she
 With frequent smile and nod depart-
 ing found,
 Half disarray'd as to her rest, the
 girl ;
 Whom first she kiss'd on either cheek,
 and then
 On either shining shoulder laid a
 hand,
 And kept her off and gazed upon
 her face,
 And told her all their converse in the
 hall,
 Proving her heart : but never light
 and shade

Coursed one another more on open
 ground
 Beneath a troubled heaven, than red
 and pale
 Across the face of Enid hearing her ;
 While slowly falling as a scale that
 falls,
 When weight is added only grain by
 grain,
 Sank her sweet head upon her gentle
 breast ;
 Nor did she lift an eye nor speak a
 word,
 Rapt in the fear and in the wonder
 of it ;
 So moving without answer to her
 rest
 She found no rest, and ever fail'd to
 draw
 The quiet night into her blood, but
 lay
 Contemplating her own unworthi-
 ness ;
 And when the pale and bloodless east
 began
 To quicken to the sun, arose, and
 raised
 Her mother too, and hand in hand
 they moved
 Down to the meadow where the
 jousts were held,
 And waited there for Yniol and
 Geraint.

And thither came the twain, and
 when Geraint
 Beheld her first in field, awaiting him,
 He felt, were she the prize of bodily
 force,
 Himself beyond the rest pushing
 could move
 The chair of Idris. Yniol's rusted
 arms
 Were on his princely person, but thro'
 these
 Princelike his bearing shone ; and
 errant knights
 And ladies came, and by and by
 the town
 Flow'd in, and settling circled all the
 lists.
 And there they fixt the forks into the
 ground,

And over these they placed a silver wand
 And over that a golden sparrow-hawk.
 Then Yniol's nephew, after trumpet blown,
 Spake to the lady with him and prociaim'd,
 "Advance and take as fairest of the fair,
 For I these two years past have won it for thee,
 The prize of beauty." Loudly spake the Prince,
 "Forbear: there is a worthier," and the knight
 With some surprise and thrice as much disdain
 Turn'd, and beheld the four, and all his face
 Glow'd like the heart of a great fire at Yule,
 So burnt he was with passion, crying out,
 "Do battle for it then," no more; and thrice
 They clash'd together, and thrice they brake their spears.
 Then each, dishorsed and drawing, lash'd at each
 So often and with such blows, that all the crowd
 Wonder'd, and now and then from distant walls
 There came a clapping as of phantom hands.
 So twice they fought, and twice they breathed, and still
 The dew of their great labour, and the blood
 Of their strong bodies, flowing, drain'd their force.
 But either's force was match'd till Yniol's cry,
 "Remember that great insult done the Queen,"
 Increased Geraint's, who heaved his blade aloft,
 And crack'd the helmet thro', and bit the bone,
 And fell'd him, and set foot upon his breast,
 And said, "Thy name?" To whom the fallen man
 Made answer, groaning, "Edyrn, son of Nudd!
 Ashamed am I that I should tell it thee.
 My pride is broken: men have seen my fall."
 "Then, Edyrn, son of Nudd," replied Geraint,
 "These two things shalt thou do, or else thou diest.
 First, thou thyself, thy lady, and thy dwarf,
 Shalt ride to Arthur's court, and being there,
 Crave pardon for that insult done the Queen,
 And shalt abide her judgment on it; next,
 Thou shalt give back their earldom to thy kin.
 These two things shalt thou do, or thou shalt die."
 And Edyrn answer'd, "These things will I do,
 For I have never yet been overthrown,
 And thou hast overthrown me, and my pride
 Is broken down, for Enid sees my fall!"
 And rising up, he rode to Arthur's court,
 And there the Queen forgave him easily,
 And being young, he changed himself, and grew
 To hate the sin that seem'd so like his own
 Of Modred, Arthur's nephew, and fell at last
 In the great battle fighting for the king.
 But when the third day from the hunting-morn
 Made a low splendour in the world, and wings
 Moved in her ivy, Enid, for she lay
 With her fair head in the dim-yellow light,
 Among the dancing shadows of the birds,
 Woke and bethought her of her promise given

No later than last eve to Prince
 Geraint—
 So bent he seem'd on going the third
 day,
 He would not leave her, till her promise
 given—
 To ride with him this morning to the
 court,
 And there be made known to the
 stately Queen,
 And there be wedded with all cere-
 mony.
 At this she cast her eyes upon her
 dress,
 And thought it never yet had look'd
 so mean.
 For as a leaf in mid-November is
 To what it was in mid-October,
 seem'd
 The dress that now she look'd on to
 the dress
 She look'd on ere the coming of
 Geraint.
 And still she look'd, and still the
 terror grew
 Of that strange bright and dreadful
 thing, a court,
 All staring at her in her faded silk :
 And softly to her own sweet heart
 she said :
 " This noble prince who won our
 earldom back,
 So splendid in his acts and his attire,
 Sweet heaven, how much I shall
 discredit him !
 Would he could tarry with us here
 awhile !
 But being so beholden to the Prince,
 It were but little grace in any of us,
 Bent as he seem'd on going this third
 day,
 To seek a second favour at his hands.
 Yet if he could but tarry a day or two,
 Myself would work eye dim, and
 finger lame,
 Far liefer than so much discredit
 him."

And Enid fell in longing for a dress
 All branch'd and flower'd with gold,
 a costly gift
 Of her good mother, given her on the
 night

Before her birthday, three sad years
 ago,
 That night of fire, when Edyrn sack'd
 their house,
 And scatter'd all they had to all the
 winds :
 For while the mother show'd it, and
 the two
 Were turning and admiring it, the
 work
 To both appear'd so costly, rose a
 cry
 That Edyrn's men were on them, and
 they fled
 With little save the jewels they had
 on,
 Which being sold and sold had
 bought them bread :
 And Edyrn's men had caught them
 in their flight,
 And placed them in this ruin ; and
 she wish'd
 The Prince had found her in her
 ancient home ;
 Then let her fancy flit across the past,
 And roam the goodly places that she
 knew ;
 And last bethought her how she used
 to watch,
 Near that old home, a pool of golden
 carp ;
 And one was patch'd and blurr'd and
 lustreless
 Among his burnish'd brethren of the
 pool ;
 And half asleep she made comparison
 Of that and these to her own faded
 self
 And the gay court, and fell asleep
 again ;
 And dreamt herself was such a faded
 form
 Among her burnish'd sisters of the
 pool ;
 But this was in the garden of a king ;
 And tho' she lay dark in the pool, she
 knew
 That all was bright ; that all about
 were birds
 Of sunny plume in gilded trellis-
 work ;
 That all the turf was rich in plots
 that look'd
 Each like a garnet or a turkis in it ;

And lords and ladies of the high court went
 In silver tissue talking things of state ;
 And children of the king in cloth of gold
 Glanced at the doors or gambol'd down the walks ;
 And while she thought " they will not see me," came
 A stately queen whose name was Guinevere,
 And all the children in their cloth of gold
 Ran to her, crying, " if we have fish at all
 Let them be gold ; and charge the gardeners now
 To pick the faded creature from the pool,
 And cast it on the mixen that it die,"
 And therewithal one came and seized on her,
 And Enid started waking, with her heart
 All overshadow'd by the foolish dream,
 And lo ! it was her mother grasping her
 To get her well awake ; and in her hand
 A suit of bright apparel, which she laid
 Flat on the couch and spoke exultingly :

" See here, my child, how fresh the colours look,
 How fast they hold like colours of a shell
 That keeps the wear and polish of the wave.
 Why not ? it never yet was worn, I trow :
 Look on it, child, and tell me if you know it."

And Enid look'd, but all confused at first,
 Could scarce divide it from her foolish dream :
 Then suddenly she knew it and rejoiced,

And answer'd, " Yea, I know it ; your good gift,
 So sadly lost on that unhappy night ;
 Your own good gift ! " " Yea, surely," said the dame,
 " And gladly given again this happy morn.
 For when the jousts were ended yesterday,
 Went Yniol thro' the town, and everywhere
 He found the sack and plunder of our house
 All scatter'd thro' the houses of the town ;
 And gave command that all which once was ours,
 Should now be ours again ; and yester-eve,
 While you were talking sweetly with your Prince
 Came one with this and laid it in my hand,
 For love or fear, or seeking favour of us,
 Because we have our earldom back again.
 And yester-eve I would not tell you of it,
 But kept it for a sweet surprise at morn.
 Yea, truly is it not a sweet surprise ?
 For I myself unwillingly have worn
 My faded suit, as you, my child, have yours,
 And howsoever patient, Yniol his,
 Ah, dear, he took me from a goodly house,
 With store of rich apparel, sumptuous fare,
 And page, and maid, and squire, and seneschal,
 And pastime both of hawk and hound, and all
 That appertains to noble maintenance.
 Yea, and he brought me to a goodly house ;
 But since our fortune slipt from sun to shade,
 And all thro' that young traitor, cruel need
 Constrain'd us, but a better time has come."

So clothe yourself in this, that better
 fits
 Our mended fortunes and a Prince's
 bride :
 For tho' you won the prize of fairest
 fair,
 And tho' I heard him call you fairest
 fair,
 Let never maiden think, however
 fair,
 She is not fairer in new clothes than
 old.
 And should some great court-lady
 say, the Prince
 Hath pick'd a ragged-robin from
 the hedge,
 And like a madman brought her to
 the court,
 Then were you shamed, and, worse,
 might shame the Prince
 To whom we are beholden ; but I
 know,
 When my dear child is set forth at her
 best,
 That neither court nor country, tho'
 they sought
 Thro' all the provinces like those of
 old
 That lighted on Queen Esther, has her
 match."

Here ceased the kindly mother out
 of breath ;
 And Enid listen'd brightening as she
 lay ;
 Then, as the white and glittering star
 of morn
 Parts from a bank of snow, and by
 and by
 Slips into golden cloud, the maiden
 rose,
 And left her maiden couch, and robed
 herself,
 Help'd by the mother's careful hand
 and eye,
 Without a mirror, in the gorgeous
 gown ;
 Who, after, turn'd her daughter
 round, and said,
 She never yet had seen her half so
 fair ;
 And call'd her like that maiden in the
 tale,

Whom Gwydion made by glamour
 out of flowers,
 And sweeter than the bride of Cas-
 sivelaun,
 Flur, for whose love the Roman
 Cæsar first
 Invaded Britain, " but we beat him
 back,
 As this great prince invaded us, and
 we,
 Not beat him back, but welcomed
 him with joy.
 And I can scarcely ride with you to
 court,
 For old am I, and rough the ways
 and wild ;
 But Yniol goes, and I full oft shall
 dream
 I see my princess as I see her now,
 Clothed with my gift, and gay among
 the gay."

But while the women thus rejoiced,
 Geraint
 Woke where he slept in the high hall,
 and call'd
 For Enid, and when Yniol made re-
 port
 Of that good mother making Enid
 gay
 In such apparel as might well beseem
 His princess, or indeed the stately
 queen,
 He answer'd ; " Earl, entreat her by
 my love,
 Albeit I give no reason but my wish,
 That she ride with me in her faded
 silk."

Yniol with that hard message went ;
 it fell,
 like flaws in summer laying lusty
 corn :
 For Enid all abash'd she knew not
 why,
 Dared not to glance at her good
 mother's face,
 But silently, in all obedience,
 Her mother silent too, nor helping
 her,
 Laid from her limbs the costly-
 broider'd gift,
 And robed them in her ancient suit
 again.

And so descended. Never man re-
 joiced
 More than Geraint to greet her thus
 attired ;
 And glancing all at once as keenly at
 her,
 As careful robins eye the delver's toil,
 Made her cheek burn and either eye-
 lid fall,
 But rested with her sweet face satis-
 fied ;
 Then seeing cloud upon the mother's
 brow,
 Her by both hands he caught, and
 sweetly said.

 " O my new mother, be not wroth
 or grieved
 At your new son, for my petition to
 her.
 When late I left Caerleon, our great
 Queen,
 In words whose echo lasts, they were
 so sweet,
 Made promise, that whatever bride I
 brought,
 Herself would clothe her like the sun
 in Heaven.
 Thereafter, when I reach'd this ruin'd
 hold,
 Beholding one so bright in dark
 estate,
 I vow'd that could I gain her, our
 kind Queen,
 No hand but hers, should make your
 Enid burst
 Sunlike from cloud—and likewise
 thought perhaps,
 That service done so graciously would
 bind
 The two together ; for I wish the
 two
 To love each other : how should Enid
 find
 A nobler friend ? Another thought
 I had ;
 I came among you here so suddenly,
 That tho' her gentle presence at the
 lists
 Might well have served for proof that
 I was loved,
 I doubted whether filial tenderness,
 Or easy nature, did not let itself

 Be moulded by your wishes for her
 weal ;
 Or whether some false sense in her
 own self
 Of my contrasting brightness, over-
 bore
 Her fancy dwelling in this dusky hall ;
 And such a sense might make her
 long for court
 And all its dangerous glories : and I
 thought,
 That could I somehow prove such
 force in her
 Link'd with such love for me, that
 at a word
 (No reason given her) she could cast
 aside
 A splendour dear to women, new to
 her,
 And therefore dearer ; or if not so
 new,
 Yet therefore tenfold dearer by the
 power
 Of intermitted custom ; then I felt
 That I could rest, a rock in ebbs and
 flows,
 Fixt on her faith. Now, therefore,
 I do rest,
 A prophet certain of my prophecy,
 That never shadow of mistrust can
 cross
 Between us. Grant me pardon for
 my thoughts :
 And for my strange petition I will
 make
 Amends hereafter by some gaudy-
 day,
 When your fair child shall wear your
 costly gift
 Beside your own warm hearth, with,
 on her knees,
 Who knows ? another gift of the high
 God,
 Which, maybe, shall have learn'd to
 lisp you thanks."

He spoke : the mother smiled, but
 half in tears,
 Then brought a mantle down and
 wrapt her in it,
 And clapt and kiss'd her, and they
 rode away.

Now thice that morning Guinevere had climb'd
 The giant tower, from whose high crest, they say,
 Men saw the goodly hills of Somerset,
 And white sails flying on the yellow sea ;
 But not to goodly hill or yellow sea
 Look'd the fair Queen, but up the vale of Usk,
 By the flat meadow, till she saw them come ;
 And then descending met them at the gates,
 Embraced her with all welcome as a friend,
 And did her honour as the Prince's bride,
 And clothed her for her bridals like the sun ;
 And all that week was old Caerleon gay,
 For by the hands of Dubric, the high saint,
 They twain were wedded with all ceremony.

And this was on the last year's Whitsuntide.
 But Enid ever kept the faded silk,
 Remembering how first he came on her,
 Drest in that dress, and how he loved her in it.
 And all her foolish fears about the dress,
 And all his journey toward her, as himself
 Had told her, and their coming to the court.

And now this morning when he said to her,
 " Put on your worst and meanest dress," she found
 And took it, and array'd herself therein.

O purblind race of miserable men,
 How many among us at this very hour
 Do forge a life-long trouble for ourselves,

By taking true for false, or false for true ;
 Here, thro' the feeble twilight of this world
 Groping, how many, until we pass and reach
 That other, where we see as we are seen !

So fared it with Geraint, who issuing forth
 That morning, when they both had got to horse,
 Perhaps because he loved her passionately,
 And felt that tempest brooding round his heart,
 Which, if he spoke at all, would break perforce
 Upon a head so dear in thunder, said :
 " Not at my side. I charge you ride before,
 Ever a good way on before ; and this I charge you, on your duty as a wife,
 Whatever happens, not to speak to me,
 No, not a word ! " and Enid was aghast ;
 And forth they rode, but scarce three paces on,
 When crying out " Effeminate as I am,
 I will not fight my way with gilded arms,
 All shall be iron ; " he loosed a mighty purse,
 Hung at his belt, and hurl'd it toward the squire.
 So the last sight that Enid had of home
 Was all the marble threshold flashing, strown
 With gold and scatter'd coinage, and the squire
 Chafing his shoulder : then he cried again,
 " To the wilds ! " and Enid leading down the tracks
 Thro' which he bade her lead him on, they past
 The marches, and by bandit-haunted holds,
 Gray swamps and pools, waste places of the hern,

And wildernesses, perilous paths, Here comes a laggard hanging down
 they rode : his head,
 Round was their pace at first, but Who seems no bolder than a beaten
 slacken'd soon : hound ;
 A stranger meeting them had surely Come, we will slay him and will have
 thought his horse
 They rode so slowly and they look'd And armour, and his damsel shall be
 so pale, ours."

That each had suffer'd some exceed-
 ing wrong.
 For he was ever saying to himself
 " O I that wasted time to tend upon
 her,
 To compass her with sweet observ-
 ances,
 To dress her beautifully and keep her
 true "—
 And there he broke the sentence in
 his heart
 Abruptly, as a man upon his tongue
 May break it, when his passion
 masters him.
 And she was ever praying the sweet
 heavens
 To save her dear lord whole from any
 wound.
 And ever in her mind she cast about
 For that unnoticed failing in herself,
 Which made him look so cloudy and
 so cold ;
 Till the great plover's human whistle
 amazed
 Her heart, and glancing round the
 waste she fear'd
 In every wavering brake an ambus-
 cade.
 Then thought again " if there be such
 in me,
 I might amend it by the grace of
 heaven,
 If he would only speak and tell me
 of it."

But when the fourth part of the
 day was gone,
 Then Enid was aware of three tall
 knights
 On horseback, wholly arm'd, behind
 a rock
 In shadow, waiting for them, caitiffs
 all ;
 And heard one crying to his fellow,
 " Look,

Then Enid ponder'd in her heart,
 and said ;
 " I will go back a little to my lord,
 And I will tell him all their caitiff
 talk ;
 For, be he wroth even to slaying me,
 Far liefer by his dear hand had I die,
 Than that my lord should suffer loss
 or shame."

Then she went back some paces of
 return,
 Met his full frown timidly firm, and
 said :
 " My lord, I saw three bandits by the
 rock
 Waiting to fall on you, and heard
 them boast
 That they would slay you, and pos-
 sess your horse
 And armour, and your damsel should
 be theirs."

He made a wrathful answer. " Did
 I wish
 Your warning or your silence ? one
 command
 I laid upon you, not to speak to me,
 And thus you keep it ! Well then,
 look—for now,
 Whether you wish me victory or de-
 feat,
 Long for my life, or hunger for my
 death,
 Yourself shall see my vigour is not
 lost."

Then Enid waited pale and sorrow-
 ful,
 And down upon him bare the bandit
 three.
 And at the midmost charging, Prince
 Geraint
 Drave the long spear a cubit thro'
 his breast

And out beyond ; and then against
 his brace
 Of comrades, each of whom had
 broken on him
 A lance that splinter'd like an icicle,
 Swung from his brand a windy buffet
 out
 Once, twice, to right, to left, and
 stunn'd the twain
 Or slew them, and dismounting like
 a man
 That skins the wild beast after slay-
 ing him,
 Stript from the three dead wolves of
 woman born
 The three gay suits of armour which
 they wore,
 And let the bodies lie, but bound the
 suits
 Of armour on their horses, each on
 each,
 And tied the bridle-reins of all the
 three
 Together, and said to her, " Drive
 them on
 Before you ; " and she drove them
 thro' the waste.

He follow'd nearer : ruth began
 to work
 Against his anger in him, while he
 watch'd
 The being he loved best in all the
 world,
 With difficulty in mild obedience
 Driving them on : he fain had spoken
 to her,
 And loosed in words of sudden fire
 the wrath
 And smoulder'd wrong that burnt
 him all within ;
 But evermore it seem'd an easier
 thing
 At once without remorse to strike
 her dead,
 Than to cry " Halt," and to her own
 bright face
 Accuse her of the least immodesty :
 And thus tongue-tied, it made him
 wroth the more
 That she *could* speak whom his own
 ear had heard
 Call herself false : and suffering thus
 he made

Minutes an age : but in scarce longer
 time
 Than at Caerleon the full-tided Usk,
 Before he turn to fall seaward again,
 Pauses, did Enid, keeping watch,
 behold
 In the first shallow shade of a deep
 wood,
 Before a gloom of stubborn-shafted
 oaks,
 Three other horsemen waiting, wholly
 arm'd,
 Whereof one seem'd far larger than
 her lord,
 And shook her pulses, crying, " Look,
 a prize !
 Three horses and three goodly suits
 of arms,
 And all in charge of whom ? a girl :
 set on."
 " Nay " said the second, " yonder
 comes a knight."
 The third, " A craven ; how he hangs
 his head."
 The giant answer'd merrily, " Yea,
 but one ?
 Wait here, and when he passes fall
 upon him."

And Enid ponder'd in her heart
 and said,
 " I will abide the coming of my lord,
 And I will tell him all their villainy.
 My lord is weary with the fight be-
 fore,
 And they will fall upon him unawares.
 I needs must disobey him for his
 good ;
 How should I dare obey him to his
 harm ?
 Needs must I speak, and tho' he kill
 me for it,
 I save a life dearer to me than mine."

And she abode his coming, and
 said to him
 With timid firmness, " Have I leave
 to speak ? "
 He said, " You take it, speaking,"
 and she spoke.

" There lurk three villains yonder
 in the wood,

And each of them is wholly arm'd, Spurr'd with his terrible war-cry ;
 and one for as one,
 Is larger-limb'd than you are, and That listens near a torrent mountain-
 they say brook,
 That they will fall upon you while All thro' the crash of the near cataract
 you pass." hears

To which he flung a wrathful answer back :
 " And if there were an hundred in At distance, were the soldiers wont
 the wood, to hear
 And every man were larger-limbed His voice in battle, and be kindled
 than I, by it,
 And all at once should sally out upon And foemen scared, like that false
 me, pair who turn'd
 I swear it would not ruffle me so much Flying, but, overtaken, died the
 As you that not obey me. Stand death
 aside, Themselves had wrought on many
 And if I fall, cleave to the better an innocent.
 man."

And Enid stood aside to wait the Thereon Geraint, dismounting,
 event, pick'd the lance
 Not dare to watch the combat, only That pleased him best, and drew
 breathe from those dead wolves
 Short fits of prayer, at every stroke a Their three gay suits of armour, each
 breath, from each,
 And he, she dreaded most, bare down And bound them on their horses,
 upon him, each on each,
 Aim'd at the helm, his lance err'd ; And tied the bridle-reins of all the
 but Geraint's, three
 A little in the late encounter strain'd, Together, and said to her, " Drive
 Struck thro' the bulky bandit's them on
 corselet home, Before you," and she drove them
 And then brake short, and down his thro' the wood.
 enemy roll'd, He follow'd nearer still : the pain
 And there lay still ; as he that tells she had
 the tale, To keep them in the wild ways of the
 Saw once a great piece of a promon- wood,
 tory, Two sets of three laden with jingling
 That had a sapling growing on it, arms,
 slip Together, served a little to disedge
 From the long shore-cliff's windy The sharpness of that pain about her
 walls to the beach, heart :
 And there lie still, and yet the sapling And they themselves, like creatures
 grew : gently born
 Solay the man transfixt. His craven But into bad hands fall'n, and now
 pair so long
 Of comrades, making slower at the By bandits groom'd, prick'd their
 Prince, light ears, and felt
 When now they saw their bulwark Her low firm voice and tender govern-
 fallen, stood ; ment.
 On whom the victor, to confound So thro' the green gloom of the
 them more, wood they past,

IDYLLS OF THE KING

And issuing under open heavens be-
 held
 A little town with towers, upon a
 rock,
 And close beneath, a meadow gem-
 like chased
 In the brown wild, and mowers mow-
 ing in it :
 And down a rocky pathway from the
 place
 There came a fair-hair'd youth, that
 in his hand
 Bare victual for the mowers : and
 Geraint
 Had ruth again on Enid looking pale :
 Then, moving downward to the
 meadow ground,
 He, when the fair-hair'd youth came
 by him, said,
 " Friend, let her eat ; the damsel is
 so faint."
 " Yea, willingly," replied the youth ;
 " and you,
 My lord, eat also, tho' the fare is
 coarse,
 And only meet for mowers ; " then
 set down
 His basket, and dismounting on the
 sward
 They let the horses graze, and ate
 themselves.
 And Enid took a little delicately,
 Less having stomach for it than
 desire
 To close with her lord's pleasure ;
 but Geraint
 Ate all the mowers' victual unawares,
 And when he found all empty, was
 amazed ;
 And " Boy," said he, " I have eaten
 all, but take
 A horse and arms for guerdon ;
 choose the best."
 He, reddening in extremity of de-
 light,
 " My lord, you overpay me fifty-
 fold."
 " You will be all the wealthier," cried
 the Prince.
 " I take it as free gift, then," said
 the boy.
 " Not guerdon ; for myself can easily,
 While your good damsel rests, return,
 and fetch
 Fresh victual for these mowers of
 our Earl ;
 For these are his, and all the field is
 his,
 And I myself am his ; and I will tell
 him
 How great a man you are : he loves
 to know
 When men of mark are in his terri-
 tory :
 And he will have you to his palace
 here,
 And serve you costlier than with
 mowers' fare."
 Then said Geraint, " I wish no
 better fare :
 I never ate with angrier appetite
 Than when I left your mowers dinner-
 less.
 And into no Earl's palace will I go.
 I know, God knows, too much of
 palaces !
 And if he want me, let him come to
 me.
 But hire us some fair chamber for
 the night,
 And stalling for the horses, and re-
 turn
 With victual for these men, and let
 us know."
 " Yea, my kind lord," said the
 glad youth, and went,
 Held his head high, and thought
 himself a knight,
 And up the rocky pathway disap-
 pear'd,
 Leading the horse, and they were
 left alone.
 But when the Prince had brought
 his errant eyes
 Home from the rock, sideways he let
 them glance
 At Enid, where she droopt : his own
 false doom,
 That shadow of mistrust should never
 cross
 Betwixt them, came upon him, and
 he sigh'd ;
 Then with another humourous ruth
 remark'd

The lusty mowers labouring dinner-
 less,
 And watch'd the sun blaze on the
 turning scythe,
 And after nodded sleepily in the heat.
 But she, remembering her old ruin'd
 hall,
 And all the windy clamour of the
 daws
 About her hollow turret, pluck'd the
 grass
 There growing longest by the mea-
 dow's edge,
 And into many a listless annulet,
 Now over, now beneath her marriage
 ring,
 Wove and unwove it, till the boy
 return'd
 And told them of a chamber, and
 they went ;
 Where, after saying to her, " If you
 will,
 'Call for the woman of the house," to
 which
 She answer'd, " Thanks, my lord ; "
 the two remain'd
 Apart by all the chamber's width,
 and mute
 As creatures voiceless thro' the fault
 of birth,
 Or two wild men supporters of a
 shield,
 Painted, who stare at open space,
 nor glance
 The one at other, parted by the
 shield.

On a sudden, many a voice along
 the street,
 And heel against the pavement echo-
 ing, burst
 Their drowse ; and either started
 while the door,
 Push'd from without, drave back-
 ward to the wall,
 And midmost of a rout of roisterers,
 Femininely fair and dissolutely pale,
 Her suitor in old years before Geraint,
 Enter'd, the wild lord of the place,
 Limours.
 He moving up with pliant courtliness,
 Greeted Geraint full face, but
 stealthily,

In the mid-warmth of welcome and
 graspt hand,
 Found Enid with the corner of his
 eye,
 And knew her sitting sad and solitary.
 Then cried Geraint for wine and
 goodly cheer
 To feed the sudden guest, and
 sumptuously
 According to his fashion, bade the
 host
 Call in what men soever were his
 friends,
 And feast with these in honour of
 their earl ;
 " And care not for the cost ; the cost
 And wine and food were brought,
 and Earl Limours
 Drank till he jested with all ease, and
 told
 Free tales, and took the word and
 play'd upon it,
 And made it of two colours ; for his
 talk,
 When wine and free companions
 kindled him,
 Was wont to glance and sparkle like
 a gem
 Of fifty facets ; thus he moved the
 Prince
 To laughter and his comrades to
 applause.
 Then, when the Prince was merry,
 ask'd Limours,
 " Your leave, my lord, to cross the
 room, and speak
 To your good damsel there who sits
 apart,
 And seems so lonely ? " " My free
 leave " he said ;
 " Get her to speak : she does not
 speak to me."
 Then rose Limours and looking at his
 feet,
 Like him who tries the bridge he
 fears may fail,
 Crost and came near, lifted adoring
 eyes,
 Bow'd at her side and utter'd whis-
 peringly :

"Enid, the pilot star of my lone life,
 Enid my early and my only love,
 Enid the loss of whom has turn'd me wild—
 What chance is this ? how is it I see you here ?
 You are in my power at last, are in my power.
 Yet fear me not : I call mine own self wild,
 But keep a touch of sweet civility
 Here in the heart of waste and wilderness.
 I thought, but that your father came between,
 In former days you saw me favourably.
 And if it were so do not keep it back :
 Make me a little happier : let me know it :
 Owe you me nothing for a life half-lost ?
 Yea, yea, the whole dear debt of all you are.
 And, Enid, you and he, I see it with joy—
 You sit apart, you do not speak to him,
 You come with no attendance, page or maid,
 To serve you—does he love you as of old ?
 For, call it lovers' quarrels, yet I know
 Tho' men may bicker with the things they love,
 They would not make them laughable in all eyes,
 Not while they loved them ; and your wretched dress,
 A wretched insult on you, dumbly speaks
 Your story, that this man loves you no more.
 Your beauty is no beauty to him now
 A common chance—right well I know it—pall'd—
 For I know men : nor will you win him back,
 For the man's love once gone never returns.
 But here is one who loves you as of old ;

With more exceeding passion than of old :
 Good, speak the word : my followers ring him round :
 He sits unarm'd ; I hold a finger up ;
 They understand : no ; I do not mean blood :
 Nor need you look so scared at what I say :
 My malice is no deeper than a moat,
 No stronger than a wall : there is the keep ;
 He shall not cross us more ; speak but the word :
 Or speak it not ; but then by Him that made me
 The one true lover which you ever had,
 I will make use of all the power I have.
 O pardon me ! the madness of that hour,
 When first I parted from you, moves me yet."

At this the tender sound of his own voice
 And sweet self-pity, or the fancy of it,
 Made his eye moist ; but Enid fear'd his eyes,
 Moist as they were, wine-heated from the feast ;
 And answer'd with such craft as women use,
 Guilty or guiltless, to stave off a chance
 That breaks upon them perilously, and said :
 "Earl, if you love me as in former years,
 And do not practise on me, come with morn,
 And snatch me from him as by violence ;
 Leave me to-night : I am weary to the death."
 Low at leave-taking, with his brandish'd plume
 Brushing his instep, bow'd the all-amorous Earl,
 And the stout Prince bade him a loud good-night.

He moving homeward babbled to his men,
 How Enid never loved a man but him,
 Nor cared a broken egg-shell for her lord.

 But Enid left alone with Prince Geraint,
 Debating his command of silence given,
 And that she now perforce must violate it,
 Held commune with herself, and while she held
 He fell asleep, and Enid had no heart
 To wake him, but hung o'er him, wholly pleased
 To find him yet unwounded after fight,
 And hear him breathing low and equally.
 Anon she rose, and stepping lightly, heap'd
 The pieces of his armour in one place,
 All to be there against a sudden need;
 Then dozed awhile herself, but over-toil'd
 By that day's grief and travel, evermore
 Seem'd catching at a rootless thorn, and then
 Went slipping down horrible precipices,
 And strongly striking out her limbs awoke;
 Then thought she heard the wild Earl at the door,
 With all his rout of random followers,
 Sound on a dreadful trumpet, summoning her;
 Which was the red cock shouting to the light,
 As the gray dawn stole o'er the dewy world,
 And glimmer'd on his armour in the room.
 And once again she rose to look at it,
 But touch'd it unawares: jangling, the casque
 Fell, and he started up and stared at her.

 Then breaking his command of silence given,
 She told him all that Earl Limours had said,
 Except the passage that he loved her not;
 Nor left untold the craft herself had used;
 But ended with apology so sweet,
 Low-spoken, and of so few words, and seem'd
 So justified by that necessity,
 That tho' he thought "was it for him she wept
 In Devon?" he but gave a wrathful groan,
 Saying "your sweet faces make good fellows fools
 And traitors. Call the host and bid him bring
 Charger and palfrey." So she glided out
 Among the heavy breathings of the house,
 And like a household Spirit at the walls
 Beat, till she woke the sleepers, and return'd:
 Then tending her rough lord, tho' all unask'd,
 In silence, did him service as a squire;
 Till issuing arm'd he found the host and cried,
 "Thy reckoning, friend?" and ere he learnt it, "Take
 Five horses and their armours;" and the host,
 Suddenly honest, answer'd in amaze,
 "My lord, I scarce have spent the worth of one!"
 "You will be all the wealthier" said the Prince,
 And then to Enid, "Forward! and to-day
 I charge you, Enid, more especially,
 What thing soever you may hear, or see,
 Or fancy (tho' I count it of small use
 To charge you) that you speak not but obey."

 And Enid answer'd, "Yea, my lord, I know

Your wish, and would obey; but riding first,
 I hear the violent threats you do not hear,
 I see the danger which you cannot see:
 Then not to give you warning, that seems hard;
 Almost beyond me: yet I would obey."

"Yea so," said he, "do it: be not too wise;
 Seeing that you are wedded to a man,
 Not quite mismated with a yawning clown,
 But one with arms to guard his head and yours,
 With eyes to find you out however far,
 And ears to hear you even in his dreams."

With that he turn'd and look'd as keenly at her
 As careful robins eye the delver's toil;
 And that within her, which a wanton fool,
 Or hasty judger would have call'd her guilt,
 Made her cheek burn and either eyelid fall.
 And Geraint look'd and was not satisfied.

Then forward by a way which, beaten broad,
 Led from the territory of false Limours
 To the waste earldom of another earl,
 Doorm, whom his shaking vassals call'd the Bull,
 Went Enid with her sullen follower on.
 Once she look'd back, and when she saw him ride
 More near by many a rood than yester-morn,
 It wellnigh made her cheerful; till Geraint
 Waving an angry hand as who should say

"You watch me," sadden'd all her heart again.
 But while the sun yet beat a dewy blade,
 The sound of many a heavily-galloping hoof
 Smote on her ear, and turning round she saw
 Dust, and the points of lances bicker in it.
 Then not to disobey her lord's behest,
 And yet to give him warning, for he rode
 As if he heard not, moving back she held
 Her finger up, and pointed to the dust.
 At which the warrior in his obstinacy,
 Because she kept the letter of his word
 Was in a manner pleased, and turning, stood.
 And in the moment after, wild Limours,
 Borne on a black horse, like a thunder-cloud
 Whose skirts are loosen'd by the breaking storm,
 Half ridden off with by the thing he rode,
 And all in passion uttering a dry shriek,
 Dash'd on Geraint, who closed with him, and bore
 Down by the length of lance and arm beyond
 The crupper, and so left him stunn'd or dead,
 And overthrew the next that follow'd him,
 And blindly rush'd on all the rout behind.
 But at the flash and motion of the man
 They vanish'd panic-stricken, like a shoal
 Of darting fish, that on a summer morn
 Adown the crystal dykes at Camelot
 Come slipping o'er their shadows on the sand,
 But if a man who stands upon the brink
 But lift a shining hand against the sun,

There is not left the twinkle of a fin
Betwixt the cressy islets white in
flower ;
So, scared but at the motion of the
man,
Fled all the boon companions of the
Earl,
And left him lying in the public
way ;
So vanish friendships only made in

In combat with the follower of Li-
mours,
Bled underneath his armour secretly,
And so rode on, nor told his gentle
wife
What ail'd him, hardly knowing it
himself,
Till his eye darken'd and his helmet
wagg'd ;
And at a sudden swerving of the
road,
Tho' happily down on a bank of grass
The Prince, without a word, from his
horse fell.

Then like a stormy sunlight smiled
Geraint,
Who saw the chargers of the two
that fell

Start from their fal'en lords, and
wildly fly,
Mixt with the flyers. " Horse and
man," he said,
" All of one mind and all right-honest
friends !

Not a hoof left : and I methinks till
now

Was honest—paid with horses and
with arms ;

I cannot steal or plunder, nor nor beg :
And so what say you, shall we strip
him there

Your lover ? has your palfrey heart
enough

To bear his armour ? shall we fast,
or dine ?

No ?—then do you, being right
honest, pray

That we may meet the horsemen of
Earl Doorm,

I too would still be honest." Thus
he said :

And sadly gazing on her bridle-reins,
And answering not one word, she led
the way.

But as a man to whom a dreadful
loss

Falls in a far land and he knows it
not,

But coming back he learns it, and
the loss

So pains him that he sickens nigh to
death ;

So fared it with Geraint, who being
prick'd

And Enid heard the clashing of his
fall,

Suddenly came, and at his side all pale
Dismounting, loosed the fastenings
of his arms,

Nor let her true hand falter, nor blue
eye

Moisten, till she had lighted on his
wound,

And tearing off her veil of faded silk
Had bared her forehead to the blister-
ing sun,

And swathed the hurt that drain'd
her dear lord's life.

Then after all was done that hand
could do,

She rested, and her desolation came
Upon her, and she wept beside the
way.

And many past, but none regarded
her,

For in that realm of lawless turbu-
lence,

A woman weeping for her murder'd
mate

Was cared as much for as a summer
shower :

One took him for a victim of Earl
Doorm,

Nor dared to waste a perilous pity on
him :

Another hurrying past, a man-at-
arms,

Rode on a mission to the bandit
Earl ;

Half whistling and half singing a
coarse song,

He drove the dust against her veiless
eyes :

Another, flying from the wrath of
Doorm

Before an ever-fancied arrow, made
The long way smoke beneath him in
his fear ;

At which her palfrey whinnying
lifted heel,

And scour'd into the coppices and
was lost,

While the great charger stood, grieved
like a man,

But at the point of noon the huge
Earl Doorm,

Broad-faced with under-fringe of
russet beard,

Bound on a foray, rolling eyes of
prey,

Came riding with a hundred lances
up ;

But ere he came, like one that hails
a ship,

Cried out with a big voice, " What,
is he dead ? "

" No, no, not dead ! " she answered
in all haste.

" Would some of your kind people
take him up,

And bear him hence out of this cruel
sun :

Most sure am I, quite sure, he is not
dead."

Then said Earl Doorm ; " Well,
if he be not dead,

Why wail you for him thus ? you
seem a child.

And be he dead, I count you for a
fool ;

Your wailing will not quicken him :
dead or not,

You mar a comely face with idiot
tears.

Yet, since the face *is* comely—some
of you,

Here, take him up, and bear him to
our hall :

An if he live, we will have him of our
band ;

And if he die, why earth has earth
enough

To hide him. See ye take the charger
too,

A noble one."

He spake, and past away,
But left two brawny spearmen, who
advanced,

Each growling like a dog, when his
good bone

Seems to be pluck'd at by the village
boys

Who love to vex him eating, and he
fears

To lose his bone, and lays his foot
upon it,

Gnawing and growling : so the ruf-
fians growl'd,

Fearing to lose, and all for a dead
man,

Their chance of booty from the
morning's raid ;

Yet raised and laid him on a litter-
bier,

Such as they brought upon their
forays out

For those that might be wounded ;
laid him on it

All in the hollow of his shield, and
took

And bore him to the naked hall of
Doorm,

(His gentle charger following him
unled)

And cast him and the bier in which
he lay

Down on an oaken settle in the
hall,

And then departed, hot in haste to
join

Their luckier mates, but growling as
before,

And cursing their lost time, and the
dead man,

And their own Earl, and their own
souls, and her.

They might as well have blest her :
she was deaf

To blessing or to cursing save from
one.

So for long hours sat Enid by her
lord,

There in the naked hall, propping his
head,

And chafing his pale hands, and calling to him.
 And at the last he waken'd from his swoon,
 And found his own dear bride propping his head,
 And chafing his faint hands, and calling to him ;
 And felt the warm tears falling on his face ;
 And said to his own heart, " she weeps for me : "
 And yet lay still, and feign'd himself as dead,
 That he might prove her to the uttermost,
 And say to his own heart " she weeps for me."

But in the falling afternoon return'd
 The huge Earl Doorm with plunder to the hall.
 His lusty spearmen follow'd him with noise :
 Each hurling down a heap of things that rang
 Against the pavement, cast his lance aside,
 And doff'd his helm : and then there flutter'd in,
 Half-bold, half-frighted, with dilated eyes,
 A tribe of women, dress'd in many hues,
 And mingled with the spearmen : and Earl Doorm
 Struck with a knife's haft hard against the board,
 And call'd for flesh and wine to feed his spears.
 And men brought in whole hogs and quarter beeves,
 And all the hall was dim with steam of flesh :
 And none spake word, but all sat down at once,
 And ate with tumult in the naked hall,
 Feeding like horses when you hear them feed ;
 Till Enid shrank far back into herself,
 To shun the wild ways of the lawless tribe.

But when Earl Doorm had eaten all he would,
 He roll'd his eyes about the hall, and found
 A damsel drooping in a corner of it.
 Then he remember'd her, and how she wept ;
 And out of her there came a power upon him ;
 And rising on the sudden he said,
 " Eat !
 I never yet beheld a thing so pale.
 God's curse, it makes me mad to see you weep.
 Eat ! Look yourself. Good luck had your good man,
 For were I dead who is it would weep for me ?
 Sweet lady, never since I first drew breath,
 Have I beheld a lily like yourself.
 And so there lived some colour in your cheek,
 There is not one among my gentlewomen
 Were fit to wear your slipper for a glove.
 But listen to me, and by me be ruled,
 And I will do the thing I have not done,
 For you shall share my earldom with me, girl,
 And we will live like two birds in one nest,
 And I will fetch you forage from all fields,
 For I compel all creatures to my will."

He spoke : the brawny spearman let his cheek
 Bulge with the unswallow'd piece, and turning stared ;
 While some, whose souls the old serpent long had drawn
 Down, as the worm draws in the wither'd leaf
 And makes it earth, hiss'd each at other's ear
 What shall not be recorded—women they,
 Women, or what had been those gracious things,
 But now desired the humbling of their best,

Yea, would have helped him to it :
 and all at once
 They hated her, who took no thought
 of them,
 But answer'd in low voice, her meek
 head yet
 Drooping, " I pray you of your
 courtesy,
 He being as he is, to let me be."

She spake so low he hardly heard
 her speak,
 But like a mighty patron, satisfied
 With what himself had done so
 graciously,
 Assumed that she had thanked him,
 adding, " yea,
 Eat and be glad, for I account you
 mine."

She answer'd meekly, " How
 should I be glad
 Henceforth in all the world at any-
 thing,
 Until my lord arise and look upon
 me ? "

Here the huge Earl cried out upon
 her talk,
 As all but empty heart and weariness
 And sickly nothing ; suddenly seized
 on her,
 And bare her by main violence to the
 board,
 And thrust the dish before her, cry-
 ing, " Eat."

" No, no," said Enid, vext, " I
 will not eat,
 Till yonder man upon the bier arise,
 And eat with me." " Drink, then,"
 he answer'd. " Here ! "
 (And fill'd a horn with wine and held
 it to her.)
 " Lo ! I myself, when flush'd with
 fight, or hot,
 God's curse, with anger—often I my-
 self,
 Before I well have drunken, scarce
 can eat :
 Drink therefore and the wine will
 change your will,"

" Not so," she cried, " by Heaven,
 I will not drink,
 Till my dear lord arise and bid me
 do it,
 And drink with me ; and if he rise no
 more,
 I will not look at wine until I die."

At this he turn'd all red and paced
 his hall,
 Now gnaw'd his under, now his
 upper lip,
 And coming up close to her, said at
 last ;
 " Girl, for I see you scorn my cour-
 tesies,
 Take warning : yonder man is surely
 dead ;
 And I compel all creatures to my will.
 Not eat nor drink ? And wherefore
 wait for one,
 Who put your beauty to this flout
 and scorn
 By dressing it in rags ? Amazed am
 I,
 Beholding how you butt against my
 wish,
 That I forbear you thus : cross me
 no more.
 At least put off to please me this poor
 gown,
 This silken rag, this beggar-woman's
 weed :
 I love that beauty should go beauti-
 fully :
 For see you not my gentlewomen
 here,
 How gay, how suited to the house or
 one,
 Who loves that beauty should go
 beautifully !
 Rise therefore ; robe yourself in this :
 obey."

He spoke, and one among his
 gentlewomen
 Display'd a splendid silk of foreign
 loom,
 Where like a shoaling sea the lovely
 blue
 Play'd into green, and thicker down
 the front

With jewels than the sward with drops of dew,
 When all night long a cloud clings to the hill,
 And with the dawn ascending lets the day
 Strike where it clung : so thickly shone the gems.

But Enid answer'd, harder to be moved
 Than hardest tyrants in their day of power,
 With life-long injuries burning un-avenged,
 And now their hour has come ; and Enid said :

" In this poor gown my dear lord found me first,
 And loved me serving in my father's hall :
 In this poor gown I rode with him to court,
 And there the Queen array'd me like the sun :
 In this poor gown he bade me clothe myself,
 When now we rode upon this fatal quest
 Of honour, where no honour can be gain'd :
 And this poor gown I will not cast aside
 Until himself arise a living man,
 And bid me cast it. I have griefs enough :
 Pray you be gentle, pray you let me be :

I never loved, can never love but him :
 Yea, God, I pray you of your gentleness
 He being as he is, to let me be."

Then strode the brute Earl up and down his hall,
 And took his russet beard between his teeth ;
 Last, coming up quite close, and in his mood
 Crying, " I count it of no more avail,
 Dame, to be gentle than ungente with you ;

Take my salute," unknighly with flat hand,
 However lightly, smote her on the cheek.

Then Enid, in her utter helplessness,
 And since she thought, " he had not dared to do it,
 Except he surely knew my lord was dead,"
 Sent forth a sudden sharp and bitter cry,
 As of a wild thing taken in the trap,
 Which sees the trapper coming thro' the wood.

This heard Geraint, and grasping at his sword,
 (It lay beside him in the hollow shield),
 Made but a single bound, and with a sweep of it
 Shore thro' the swarthy neck, and like a ball
 The russet-bearded head roll'd on the floor.
 So died Earl Doorm by him he counted dead.
 And all the men and women in the hall
 Rose when they saw the dead man rise, and fled
 Yelling as from a spectre, and the two
 Were left alone together, and he said :

" Enid, I have used you worse than that dead man ;
 Done you more wrong : we both have undergone
 That trouble which has left me thrice your own :
 Henceforward I will rather die than doubt.
 And here I lay this penance on myself,
 Not tho' mine own ears heard you yester-morn—
 You thought me sleeping, but I heard you say,
 I heard you say, that you were no true wife :

I swear I will not ask your meaning
in it :

I do believe yourself against yourself,
And will henceforward rather die
than doubt."

And Enid could not say one tender
word,
She felt so blunt and stupid at the
heart :

She only prayed him, " Fly, they
will return

And slay you ; fly, your charger is
without,

My palfrey lost." " Then, Enid,
shall you ride

Behind me." " Yea," said Enid,
" let us go."

And moving out they found the stately
horse,

Who now no more a vassal to the
thief,

But free to stretch his limbs in lawful
fight,

Neigh'd with all gladness as they
came, and stoop'd

With a low whinny toward the pair :
and she

Kiss'd the white star upon his noble
front,

Glad also ; then Geraint upon the
horse

Mounted, and reach'd a hand, and
on his foot

She set her own and climb'd ; he
turn'd his face

And kiss'd her climbing, and she cast
her arms

About him, and at once they rode
away.

And never yet, since high in Para-
dise

O'er the four rivers the first roses
blew,

Came purer pleasure unto mortal
kind

Than lived thro' her, who in that
perilous hour

Put hand to hand beneath her hus-
band's heart,

And felt him hers again : she did not
weep,

But o'er her meek eyes came a happy
mist

Like that which kept the heart of
Eden green

Before the useful trouble of the
rain :

Yet not so misty were her meek blue
eyes

As not to see before them on the
path,

Right in the gateway of the bandit
hold,

A knight of Arthur's court, who laid
his lance

In rest, and made as if to fall upon
him.

Then, fearing for his hurt and loss of
blood,

She, with her mind all full of what
had chanced,

Shriek'd to the stranger, " Slay not
a dead man ! "

" The voice of Enid," said the knight ;
but she,

Beholding it was Edyrn son of Nudd,
Was moved so much the more, and

shriek'd again,
" O cousin, slay not him who gave
you life."

And Edyrn moving frankly forward
spake :

" My lord Geraint, I greet you with
all love ;

I took you for a bandit knight of
Doorm ;

And fear not, Enid, I should fall
upon him,

Who love you, Prince, with some-
thing of the love

Wherewith we love the Heaven that
chastens us.

For once, when I was up so high in
pride

That I was halfway down the slope
to Hell,

By overthrowing me you threw me
higher.

Now, made a knight of Arthur's
Table Round,

And since I knew this Earl. when I
myself

Was half a bandit in my lawless hour,
I come the mouthpiece of our King

to Doorm

(The King is close behind me) bidding him
Disband himself, and scatter all his powers,
Submit, and hear the judgment of the King."

"He hears the judgment of the King of Kings,"
Cried the wan Prince; "and lo the powers of Doorm
Are scatter'd," and he pointed to the field,
Where, huddled here and there on mound and knoll,
Were men and women staring and aghast,
While some yet fled; and then he plainlier told
How the huge Earl lay slain within his hall.
But when the knight besought him, "Follow me,
Prince, to the camp, and in the King's own ear
Speak what has chanced; you surely have endured
Strange chances here alone;" that other flush'd,
And hung his head, and halted in reply,
Fearing the mild face of the blameless King,
And after madness acted question ask'd:
Till Edyrn crying, "If you will not go
To Arthur, then will Arthur come to you,"
"Enough," he said, "I follow," and they went.
But Enid in their going had two fears,
One from the bandit scatter'd in the field,
And one from Edyrn. Every now and then,
When Edyrn rein'd his charger at her side,
She shrink a little. In a hollow land,
From which old fires have broken, men may fear
Fresh fire and ruin. He, perceiving, said:

"Fair and dear cousin, you that most had cause
To fear me, fear no longer, I am changed.
Yourself were first the blameless cause to make
My nature's prideful sparkle in the blood
Break into furious flame; being repulsed
By Yniol and yourself, I schemed and wrought
Until I overturn'd him; then set up (With one main purpose ever at my heart)
My haughty jousts, and took a paramour;
Did her mock-honour as the fairest fair,
And, toppling over all antagonism, So wax'd in pride, that I believed myself
Unconquerable, for I was well-nigh mad;
And, but for my main purpose in these jousts,
I should have slain your father, seized yourself.
I lived in hope that sometime you would come
To these my lists with him whom best you loved;
And there, poor cousin, with your meek blue eyes,
The truest eyes that ever answer'd heaven,
Behold the overturn and trample on him.
Then, had you cried, or knelt, or pray'd to me,
I should not less have kill'd him. And you came,—
But once you came,—and with your own true eyes
Beheld the man you loved (I speak as one
Speaks of a service done him) overthrow
My proud self, and my purpose three years old,
And set his foot upon me, and give me life.
There was I broken down: there was I saved:

Tho' thence I rode all-shamed, hating
 the life
 He gave me, meaning to be rid of it.
 And all the penance the Queen laid
 upon me
 Was but to rest awhile within her
 court ;
 Where first as sullen as a beast new-
 caged,
 And waiting to be treated like a wolf,
 Because I knew my deeds were known,
 I found,
 Instead of scornful pity or pure scorn,
 Such fine reserve and noble reticence,
 Manners so kind, yet stately, such a
 grace
 Of tenderest courtesy, that I began
 To glance behind me at my former
 life,
 And find that it had been the wolf's
 indeed :
 And oft I talk'd with Dubric, the
 high saint,
 Who, with mild heat of holy oratory,
 Subdued me somewhat to that gentle-
 ness,
 Which, when it weds with manhood,
 makes a man.
 And you were often there about the
 Queen,
 But saw me not, or mark'd not if you
 saw ;
 Nor did I care or dare to speak with
 you,
 But kept myself aloof till I was
 changed ;
 And fear not cousin ; I am changed
 indeed."

He spoke, and Enid easily believed,
 Like simple noble natures, credulous
 Of what they long for, good in friend
 or foe,
 There most in those who most have
 done them ill,
 And when they reach'd the camp the
 King himself
 Advanced to greet them, and be-
 holding her
 Tho' pale, yet happy, ask'd her not a
 word,
 But went apart with Edyrn, whom
 he held
 In converse for a little, and return'd,

And, gravely smiling, lifted her from
 horse,
 And kiss'd her with all pureness,
 brother-like,
 And show'd an empty tent allotted
 her,
 And glancing for a minute, till he
 saw her
 Pass into it, turn'd to the Prince, and
 said :

" Prince, when of late you pray'd
 me for my leave
 To move to your own land, and there
 defend
 Your marches, I was prick'd with
 some reproof,
 As one that let foul wrong stagnate
 and be,
 By having look'd too much thro' alien
 eyes,
 And wrought too long with delegated
 hands,
 Not used mine own : but now behold
 me come
 To cleanse this common sewer of all
 my realm,
 With Edyrn and with others : have
 you look'd
 At Edyrn ? have you seen how nobly
 changed ?
 This work of his is great and wonder-
 ful,
 His very face with change of heart
 is changed.
 The world will not believe a man re-
 pents :
 And this wise world of ours is mainly
 right.
 Full seldom *does* a man repent, or use
 Both grace and will to pick the vicious
 quitch
 Of blood and custom wholly out of
 him,
 And make all clean, and plant him-
 self afresh.
 Edyrn has done it, weeding all his
 heart
 As I will weed this land before I go.
 I, therefore, made him of our Table
 Round,
 Not rashly, but have proved him
 everyway
 One of our noblest, our most valorous,

Sanest and most obedient : and indeed
 This work of Edyrn wrought upon himself
 After a life of violence, seems to me
 A thousand-fold more great and wonderful
 Than if some knight of mine, risking his life,
 My subject with my subjects under him,
 Should make an onslaught single on a realm
 Of robbers, tho' he slew them one by one,
 And were himself nigh wounded to the death."

So spake the King ; low bow'd the Prince, and felt
 His work was neither great nor wonderful,
 And past to Enid's tent ; and thither came
 The King's own leech to look into his hurt ;
 And Enid tended on him there ; and there
 Her constant motion round him, and the breath
 Of her sweet tendance hovering over him,
 Fill'd all the genial courses of his blood
 With deeper and with ever deeper love,
 As the south-west that blowing Bala lake
 Fills all the sacred Dee. So past the days.

But while Geraint lay healing of his hurt,
 The blameless King went forth and cast his eyes
 On whom his father Uther left in charge
 Long since, to guard the justice of the King :
 He look'd and found them wanting ; and as now
 Men weed the white horse on the Berkshire hills

To keep him bright and clean as heretofore,
 He rooted out the slothful officer
 Or guilty, which for bribe had wink'd at wrong,
 And in their chairs set up a stronger race
 With hearts and hands, and sent a thousand men
 To till the wastes, and moving everywhere
 Clear'd the dark places and let in the law,
 And broke the bandit holds and cleansed the land.

Then, when Geraint was whole again, they past
 With Arthur to Caerleon upon Usk.
 There the great Queen once more embraced her friend,
 And clothed her in apparel like the day.
 And tho' Geraint could never take again
 That comfort from their converse which he took
 Before the Queen's fair name was breathed upon,
 He rested well content that all was well.
 Thence after tarrying for a space they rode,
 And fifty knights rode with them to the shores
 Of Severn, and they past to their own land.
 And there he kept the justice of the King
 So vigorously yet mildly, that all hearts
 Applauded, and the spiteful whisper died :
 And being ever foremost in the chase,
 And victor at the tilt and tournament,
 They call'd him the great Prince and man of men.
 But Enid, whom her ladies loved to call
 Enid the Fair, a grateful people named
 Enid the Good ; and in their halls arose

The cry of children, Enids and
 Geraints
 Of times to be ; nor did he doubt
 her more
 But rested in her fēalty, till he
 crown'd
 A happy life with a fair death, and fell
 Against the heathen of the Northern
 Sea
 In battle, fighting for the blameless
 King.

VIVIEN

A STORM was coming, but the winds
 were still,
 And in the wild woods of Broceliande,
 Before an oak, so hollow huge and
 old
 It look'd a tower of ruin'd mason-
 work,
 At Merlin's feet the wily Vivien lay.

The wily Vivien stole from Arthur's
 court :
 She hated all the knights, and heard
 in thought
 Their lavish comment when her name
 was named.
 For once, when Arthur walking all
 alone,
 Vext at a rumour rife about the
 Queen,
 Had met her, Vivien, being greeted
 fair,
 Would fain have wrought upon his
 cloudy mood
 With reverent eyes mock-loyal,
 shaken voice,
 And flutter'd adoration, and at last
 With dark sweet hints of some who
 prized him more
 Than who should prize him most ; at
 which the King
 Had gazed upon her blankly and gone
 by :
 But one had watch'd, and had not held
 his peace :
 It made the laughter of an afternoon
 That Vivien should attempt the
 blameless King.

And after that, she set herself to gain
 Him, the most famous man of all
 those times,
 Merlin, who knew the range of all
 their arts,
 Had built the King his havens, ships,
 and halls,
 Was also Bard, and knew the starry
 heavens ;
 The people called him Wizard ; whom
 at first
 She play'd about with slight and
 sprightly talk
 And vivid smiles, and faintly-
 venom'd points
 Of slander, glancing here and grazing
 there ;
 And yielding to his kindlier moods,
 the Seer
 Would watch her at her petulance,
 and play,
 Ev'n when they seem'd unloveable,
 and laugh
 As those that watch a kitten ; thus
 he grew
 Tolerant of what he half disdain'd,
 and she,
 Perceiving that she was but half
 disdain'd,
 Began to break her sports with grave
 fits,
 Turn red or pale, would often when
 they met
 Sigh fully, or all-silent gaze upon him
 With such a fixt devotion, that the
 old man,
 Tho' doubtful, felt the flattery, and
 at times
 Would flatter his own wish in age for
 love,
 And half believe her true : for thus
 at times
 He waver'd ; but that other clung to
 him,
 Fixt in her will, and so the seasons
 went.
 Then fell upon him a great melan-
 choly ;
 And leaving Arthur's court he gain'd
 the beach ;
 There found a little boat, and stept
 into it ;
 And Vivien follow'd, but he mark'd
 her not.

He took the helm and he the sail; And I will kiss you for it; " he was
 the boat mute :
 Drave with a sudden wind across the So dark a forethought roll'd about
 deeps, his brain,
 And touching Breton sands, they As on a dull day in an Ocean cave
 disembark'd. The blind wave feeling round his long
 And then she follow'd Merlin all the sea-hall
 way, In silence : wherefore, when she
 Ev'n to the wild woods of Broceliande, lifted up
 For Merlin once had told her of a A face of sad appeal, and spake and
 charm, said,
 The which if any wrought on any one " O Merlin, do you love me ? " and
 With woven paces and with waving again,
 arms, " O Merlin, do you love me ? " and
 The man so wrought on ever seem'd once more,
 to lie " Great Master, do you love me ? "
 Closed in the four walls of a hollow he was mute.
 tower, And lissome Vivien, holding by his
 From which was no escape for ever- heel,
 more; Writhed toward him, slid up his
 And none could find that man for knee and sat,
 evermore, Behind his ankle twined her hollow
 Nor could he see but him who wrought feet
 the charm Together, curved an arm about his
 Coming and going, and he lay as dead neck,
 And lost to life and use and name and Clung like a snake ; and letting her
 fame. left hand
 And Vivien ever sought to work the Droop from his mighty shoulder, as a
 charm leaf,
 Upon the great Enchanter of the Made with her right a comb of pearl
 Time, to part
 As fancying that her glory would be The lists of such a beard as youth
 great gone out
 According to his greatness whom she Had left in ashes : then he spoke and
 quench'd. said,
 Not looking at her, " who are wise in
 love
 There lay she all her length and Love most, say least," and Vivien
 kiss'd his feet, answer'd quick,
 As if in deepest reverence and in love, " I saw the little elf-god eyeless once
 A twist of gold was round her hair ; a In Arthur's arras hall at Camelot :
 robe But neither eyes nor tongue—O
 Of samite without price, that more stupid child !
 exprest Yet you are wise who say it ; let me
 Than hid her, clung about her lissome think
 limbs, Silence is wisdom : I am silent then
 In colour like the satin-shining palm And ask no kiss ; " then adding all at
 On shallows in the windy gleams of once,
 March : " And lo, I clothe myself with wis-
 And while she kiss'd them, crying, dom," drew
 " Trample me, The vast and shaggy mantle of his
 Dear feet, that I have follow'd thro' beard
 the world, Across her neck and bosom to her
 And I will pay you worship ' tread knee.

And call'd herself a gilded summer fly
Caught in a great old tyrant spider's
web,
Who meant to eat her up in that wild
wood
Without one word. So Vivien call'd
herself,
But rather seem'd a lovely baleful
star
Veil'd in gray vapour; till he sadly
smiled:

"To what request for what strange
boon," he said,
"Are these your pretty tricks and
fooleries,
O Vivien, the preamble? yet my
thanks,
For these have broken up my melan-
choly."

And Vivien answer'd smiling
saucily,
"What, O my Master, have you
found your voice?
I bid the stranger welcome. Thanks
at last!
But yesterday you never open'd lip,
Except indeed to drink: no cup had
we:
In mine own lady palms I cull'd the
spring
That gather'd trickling dropwise
from the cleft,
And made a pretty cup of both my
hands
And offer'd you it kneeling: then you
drank
And knew no more, nor gave me one
poor word;
O no more thanks than might a goat
have given
With no more sign of reverence than
a beard.
And when we halted at that other
well,
And I was faint to swooning, and you
lay
Foot-gilt with all the blossom-dust of
those
Deep meadows we had traversed, did
you know
That Vivien bathed your feet before
her own?"

And yet no thanks: and all thro'
this wild wood
And all this morning when I fondled
you:
Boon, yes, there was a boon, one not
so strange—
How had I wrong'd you? surely you
are wise,
But such a silence is more wise than
kind."

And Merlin lock'd his hand in hers
and said;
"O did you never lie upon the shore,
And watch the curl'd white of the
coming wave
Glass'd in the slippery sand before
it breaks?
Ev'n such a wave, but not so pleasur-
able,
Dark in the glass of some presageful
mood,
Had I for three days seen, ready to
fall.
And then I rose and fled from Arthur's
court
To break the mood. You follow'd
me unask'd;
And when I look'd, and saw you
following still,
My mind involved yourself the
nearest thing
In that mind-mist: for shall I tell
you truth?
You seem'd that wave about to break
upon me
And sweep me from my hold upon
the world,
My use and name and fame. Your
pardon, child.
Your pretty sports have brighten'd
all again.
And ask your boon, for boon I owe
you thrice,
Once for wrong done you by confu-
sion, next
For thanks it seems still now neglected,
last
For these your dainty gambols:
wherefore ask;
And take this boon so strange and
not so strange."

And Vivien answer'd smiling | O, if you think this wickedness in me,
 mournfully ; | That I should prove it on you una-
 " O not so strange as my long asking | wares,
 it, | To make you lose your use and name
 Nor yet so strange as you yourself are | and fame,
 strange, | That makes me most indignant ; then
 Nor half so strange as that dark mood | our bond
 of yours. | Had best be loosed for ever : but
 I ever fear'd you were not wholly | think or not,
 mine ; | By Heaven that hears I tell you the
 And see, yourself have own'd you | clean truth,
 did me wrong. | As clean as blood of babes, as white
 The people call you prophet : let it be : | as milk :
 But not of those that can expound | O Merlin, may this earth, if ever I,
 themselves. | If these unwitty wandering wits of
 Take Vivien for expounder ; she will | mine,
 call | Ev'n in the jumbled rubbish of a
 That three-days-long presageful | dream,
 . gloom of yours | Have tript on such conjectural trea-
 No presage, but the same mistrustful | chery—
 mood | May this hard earth cleave to the
 That makes you seem less noble than | Nadir hell
 yourself, | Down, down, and close again, and
 Whenever I have ask'd this very | nip me flat,
 boon, | If I be such a traitress. Yield my
 Now ask'd again : for see you not, | boon,
 dear love, | Till which I scarce can yield you all I
 That such a mood as that, which | am ;
 lately gloom'd | And grant my re-reiterated wish,
 Your fancy when you saw me follow- | The great proof of your love : be-
 ing you, | cause I think,
 Must make me fear still more you | However wise, you hardly know me
 are not mine, | yet."
 Must make me yearn still more to |
 prove you mine, | And Merlin loosed his hand from
 And make me wish still more to learn | hers and said,
 this charm | " I never was less wise, however wise,
 Of woven paces and of waving hands, | Too curious Vivien, tho' you talk of
 As proof of trust. O, Merlin, teach | trust,
 it me. | Than when I told you first of such a
 The charm so taught will charm us | charm.
 both to rest. | Yea, if you talk of trust I tell you
 For, grant me some slight power upon | this,
 your fate, | Too much I trusted, when I told you
 I, feeling that you felt me worthy | that,
 trust, | And stir'd this vice in you which
 Should rest and let you rest, knowing | ruin'd man
 you mine. | Thro' woman the first hour ; for
 And therefore be as great as you are | soe'er
 named, | In children a great curio
 Not muffled round with selfish re- | well,
 ticence. | Who have to learn themse'
 How hard you look and how deny- | the world,
 ingly !

In you, that are no child, for still I find
 Your face is practised, when I spell the lines,
 I call it,—well, I will not call it vice :
 But since you name yourself the summer fly,
 I well could wish a cobweb for the gnat,
 That settles, beaten back, and beaten back
 Settles, till one could yield for weariness :
 But since I will not yield to give you power
 Upon my life and use and name and fame,
 Why will you never ask some other boon ?
 Yea, by God's rood, I trusted you too much."

And Vivien, like the tenderest-hearted maid
 That ever bided tryst at village stile,
 Made answer, either eyelid wet with tears.
 "Nay, master, be not wrathful with your maid ;
 Caress her : let her feel herself forgiven
 Who feels no heart to ask another boon.
 I think you hardly know the tender rhyme
 Of ' trust me not at all or all in all.'
 I heard the great Sir Lancelot sing it once,
 And it shall answer for me. Listen to it.

' In Love, if Love be Love, if Love be ours,
 Faith and unfaith can ne'er be equal powers :
 Unfaith in aught is want of faith in all.

' It is the little rift within the lute,
 That by and by will make the music mute,
 And ever widening slowly silence all.

' The little rift within the lover's lute,

Or little pitted speck in garner'd fruit,
 That rotting inward slowly moulders all.

' It is not worth the keeping : let it go :
 But shall it ? answer, darling, answer, no.
 And trust me not at all or all in all.'

O, master, do you love my tender rhyme ? "

And Merlin look'd and half believed her true,
 So tender was her voice, so fair her face,
 So sweetly gleam'd her eyes behind her tears
 Like sunlight on the plain behind a shower :
 And yet he answer'd half indignantly.

" Far other was the song that once I heard
 By this huge oak, sung nearly where we sit :
 For here we met, some ten or twelve of us,
 To chase a creature that was current then
 In these wild woods, the hart with golden horns.
 It was the time when first the question rose
 About the founding of a Table Round,
 That was to be, for love of God and men
 And noble deeds, the flower of all the world.
 And each incited each to noble deeds.
 And while we waited, one, the youngest of us,
 We could not keep him silent, out he flash'd,
 And into such a song, such fire for fame,
 Such trumpet-blowings in it, coming down
 To such a stern and iron-clashing close,
 That when he stopt we long'd to hurl together,
 And should have done it ; but the beauteous beast

Scared by the noise upstarted at our feet,
 And like a silver shadow slipt away
 Thro' the dim land ; and all day long
 we rode
 Thro' the dim land against a rushing
 wind,
 That glorious roundel echoing in our
 ears,
 And chased the flashes of his golden
 horns
 Until they vanish'd by the fairy well
 That laughs at iron—as our warriors
 did—
 Where children cast their pins and
 nails, and cry,
 'Laugh, little well.' but touch it
 with a sword,
 It buzzes wildly round the point ;
 and there
 We lost him : such a noble song was
 that.
 But, Vivien, when you sang me that
 sweet rhyme,
 I felt as tho' you knew this cursed
 charm,
 Were proving it on me, and that I lay
 And felt them slowly ebbing, name
 and fame."

And Vivien answer'd smiling
 mournfully ;
 "O mine have ebb'd away for ever-
 more,
 And all thro' following you to this
 wild wood,
 Because I saw you sad, to comfort
 you.
 Lo now, what hearts have men ! they
 never mount
 As high as woman in her selfless mood.
 And touching fame, howe'er you
 scorn my song,
 Take one verse more—the lady speaks
 it—this :

'My name, once mine, now thine,
 is closelier mine,
 For fame, could fame be mine, that
 fame were thine,
 And shame, could shame be thine,
 that shame were mine.
 So trust me not at all or all in all.'

"Says she not well ? and there is
 more—this rhyme
 Is like the fair pearl-necklace of the
 Queen,
 That burst in dancing, and the pearls
 were spilt ;
 Some lost, some stolen, some as relics
 kept.
 But nevermore the same two sister
 pearls
 Ran down the silken thread to kiss
 each other
 On her white neck—so is it with this
 rhyme :
 It lives dispersedly in many hands,
 And every minstrel sings it differ-
 ently ;
 Yet is there one true line, the pearl of
 pearls ;
 'Man dreams of Fame while woman
 wakes to love.'
 True : Love, tho' Love were of the
 grossest, carves
 A portion from the solid present, eats
 And uses, careless of the rest ; but
 Fame,
 The Fame that follows death is no-
 thing to us ;
 And what is Fame in life but half-
 disface,
 And counterchanged with darkness ?
 you yourself
 Know well that Envy calls you Devil's
 son,
 And since you seem the Master of all
 Art,
 They fain would make you Master of
 all Vice."

And Merlin lock'd his hand in hers
 and said,
 "I once was looking for a magic
 weed,
 And found a fair young squire who
 sat alone,
 Had carved himself a knightly shield
 of wood,
 And then was painting on it fancied
 arms,
 Azure, an Eagle rising or, the Sun
 In dexter chief ; the scroll 'I follow
 fame.'
 And speaking not, but leaning over
 him,

I took his brush and blotted out the bird,
 And made a Gardener putting in a graft,
 With this for motto, 'Rather use than fame.'
 You should have seen him blush ; but afterwards
 He made a stalwart knight. O Vivien,
 For you, methinks you think you love me well ;
 For me, I love you somewhat ; rest : and Love
 Should have some rest and pleasure in himself,
 Not ever be too curious for a boon,
 Too prurient for a proof against the grain
 Of him you say you love : but Fame with men,
 Being but ampler means to serve mankind,
 Should have small rest or pleasure in herself,
 But work as vassal to the larger love,
 That dwarfs the petty love of one to one.
 Use gave me Fame at first, and Fame again
 Increasing gave me use. Lo, there my boon !
 What other ? for men sought to prove me vile,
 Because I wish'd to give them greater minds :
 And then did Envy call me Devil's son :
 The sick weak beast seeking to help herself
 By striking at her better, miss'd, and brought
 Her own claw back, and wounded her own heart.
 Sweet were the days when I was all unknown,
 But when my name was lifted up, the storm
 Broke on the mountain and I cared not for it.
 Right well know I that Fame is half-disfame,
 Yet needs must work my work. That other fame,
 To one at least, who hath not children, vague,
 The cackle of the unborn about the grave,
 I cared not for it : a single misty star,
 Which is the second in a line of stars
 That seem a sword beneath a belt of three,
 I never gazed upon it but I dreamt
 Of some vast charm concluded in that star
 To make fame nothing. Wherefore, if I fear,
 Giving you power upon me thro' this charm,
 That you might play me falsely, having power,
 However well you think you love me now
 (As sons of kings loving in pupilage
 Have turn'd to tyrants when they came to power)
 I rather dread the loss of use than fame ;
 If you—and not so much from wickedness,
 As some wild turn of anger, or a mood
 Of overstrain'd affection, it may be,
 To keep me all to your own self, or else
 A sudden spurt of woman's jealousy,—
 Should try this charm on whom you say you love."

And Vivien answer'd smiling as in wrath.
 "Have I not sworn ? I am not trusted. Good !
 Well, hide it, hide it ; I shall find it out ;
 And being found take heed of Vivien.
 A woman and not trusted, doubtless I
 Might feel some sudden turn of anger born
 Of your misfaith ; and your fine epithet
 Is accurate too, for this full love of mine
 Without the full heart back may merit well
 Your term of overstrain'd. So used as I,

My daily wonder is, I love at all.
And as to woman's jealousy, O why
not ?

O to what end, except a jealous one,
And one to make me jealous if I love,
Was this fair charm invented by
yourself ?

I well believe that all about this
world

You cage a buxom captive here and
there,

Closed in the four walls of a hollow
tower

From which is no escape for ever-
more."

Then the great Master merrily
answer'd her.

" Full many a love in loving youth
was mine,

I needed then no charm to keep them
mine

But youth and love ; and that full
heart of yours

Whereof you prattle, may now assure
you mine ;

So live uncharm'd. For those who
wrought it first,

The wrist is parted from the hand
that waved,

The feet unmortised from their ankle-
bones

Who paced it, ages back : but will
you hear

The legend as in guerdon for your
rhyme ?

" There lived a king in the most
Eastern East,

Less old than I, yet older, for my
blood

Hath earnest in it of far springs to be.
A tawny pirate anchor'd in his port,

Whose bark had plunder'd twenty
nameless isles ;

And passing one, at the high peep of
dawn,

He saw two cities in a thousand
boats

All fighting for a woman on the sea.
And pushing his black craft among

them all,
Helightly scatter'd theirs and brought
her off,

With loss of half his people arrow-
slain ;

A maid so smooth, so white, so won-
derful,

They said a light came from her when
she moved :

And since the pirate would not yield
her up,

The King impaled him for his piracy ;
Then made her Queen : but those

isle-nurtur'd eyes
Waged such unwilling tho' successful

war
On all the youth, they sicken'd ;
councils thinn'd,

And armies waned, for magnet-like
she drew

The rustiest iron of old fighters'
hearts ;

And beasts themselves would wor-
ship ; camels knelt

Unbidden, and the brutes of moun-
tain back

That carry kings in castles, bow'd
black knees

Of homage, ringing with their ser-
pent hands,

To make her smile, her golden ankle-
bells.

What wonder, being jealous, that he
sent

His horns of proclamation out thro'
all

The hundred under-kingdoms that he
sway'd

To find a wizard who might teach the
King

Some charm, which being wrought
upon the Queen

Might keep her all his own : to such
a one

He promised more than ever king has
given,

A league of mountain full of golden
mines,

A province with a hundred miles of
coast,

A palace and a princess, all for him :
But on all those who tried and fail'd,

the King
Pronounced a dismal sentence, mean-
ing by it

To keep the list low and pretenders
back,

Or like a king, not to be trifled with—
Their heads should moulder on the
city gates.

And many tried and fail'd, because
the charm

Of nature in her overbore their own :
And many a wizard brow bleach'd on
the walls :

And many weeks a troop of carrion
crows

Hung like a cloud above the gateway
towers."

And Vivien breaking in upon him,
said :

" I sit and gather honey ; yet, me-
thinks,

Your tongue has tript a little : ask
yourself,

The lady never made *unwilling* war
With those fine eyes : she had her
pleasure in it,

And made her good man jealous with
good cause.

And lived there neither dame nor
damsel then

Wroth at a lover's loss ? were all as
tame,

I mean, as noble, as their Queen was
fair ?

Not one to flirt a venom at her eyes,
Or pinch a murderous dust into her
drink,

Or make her paler with a poison'd
rose ?

Well, those were not our days : but
did they find

A wizard ? Tell me, was he like to
thee ? "

She ceased, and made her lithe
arm round his neck

Tighten, and then drew back, and
let her eyes

Speak for her, glowing on him, like
a bride's

On her new lord, her own, the first of

He answer'd laughing, " Nay, not
like to me.

At last they found—his foragers for
charms—

A little glassy-headed hairless man,

Who lived alone in a great wild on
grass ;

Read but one book, and ever reading
grew

So grated down and filed away with
thought,

So lean his eyes were monstrous ;
while the skin

Clung but to crate and basket, ribs
and spine.

And since he kept his mind on one
sole aim,

Nor ever touch'd fierce wine, nor
tasted flesh,

Nor own'd a sensual wish, to him the
wall

That sunders ghosts and shadow-
casting men

Became a crystal, and he saw them
thro' it,

And heard their voices talk behind
the wall,

And learnt their elemental secrets,
powers

And forces ; often o'er the sun's
bright eye

Drew the vast eyelid of an inky
cloud,

And lash'd it at the base with slanting
storm ;

Or in the noon of mist and driving
rain,

When the lake whiten'd and the pine-
wood roar'd,

And the cairn'd mountain was a
shadow, sunn'd

The world to peace again : here was
the man.

And so by force they dragg'd him to
the King.

And then he taught the King to
charm the Queen

In such-wise, that no man could see
her more,

Nor saw she save the King, who
wrought the charm,

Coming and going, and she lay as
dead,

And lost all use of life : but when the
King

Made proffer of the league of golden
mines,

The province with a hundred miles of
coast,

The palace and the princess, that old
 Went back to his old wild, and lived
 on grass,
 And vanish'd, and his book came
 down to me."

And Vivien answer'd smiling
 saucily;
 "You have the book: the charm is
 written in it:
 Good: take my counsel: let me
 know it at once:
 For keep it like a puzzle chest in chest,
 With each chest lock'd and padlock'd
 thirty-fold,
 And whelm all this beneath as vast a
 mound
 As after furious battle turfs the slain
 On some wild down above the windy
 deep,
 I yet should strike upon a sudden
 means
 To dig, pick, open, find and read the
 charm:
 Then, if I tried it, who should blame
 me then?"

And smiling as a Master smiles at
 one
 That is not of his school, nor any
 school
 But that where blind and naked
 Ignorance
 Delivers brawling judgments, un-
 ashamed,
 On all things all day long; he answer'd
 her.

"You read the book, my pretty
 Vivien!
 O ay, it is but twenty pages long,
 But every page having an ample
 marge,
 And every marge enclosing in the
 midst
 A square of text that looks a little
 blot,
 The text no larger than the limbs of
 fleas;
 And every square of text an awful
 charm,
 Writ in a language that has long gone
 by.

So long, that mountains have arisen
 since
 With cities on their flanks—you read
 the book!
 And every margin scribbled, crost,
 and cramm'd
 With comment, densest condensation,
 hard
 To mind and eye; but the long sleep-
 less nights
 Of my long life have made it easy to
 me.
 And none can read the text, not even
 I;
 And none can read the comment but
 myself;
 And in the comment did I find the
 charm.
 O, the results are simple; a mere
 child
 Might use it to the harm of anyone,
 And never could undo it: ask no
 more:
 For tho' you should not prove it
 upon me,
 But keep that oath you swore, you
 might, perchance,
 Assay it on some one of the Table
 Round,
 And all because you dream they
 babble of you."

And Vivien, frowning in true anger,
 said:
 "What dare the full-fed liars say of
 me?
 They ride abroad redressing human
 wrongs!
 They sit with knife in meat and wine
 in horn.
 They bound to holy vows of chastity!
 Were I not woman, I could tell a tale.
 But you are man, you well can under-
 stand
 The shame that cannot be explain'd
 for shame.
 Not one of all the drove should touch
 me: swine!"

Then answer'd Merlin careless of
 her words.
 "You breathe but accusation vast
 and vague,

Spleen-born, I think, and proofless.
 If you know,
 Set up the charge you know, to stand
 or fall ! ”

And Vivien answer'd frowning
 wrathfully.
 “ O ay, what say ye to Sir Valence,
 him
 Whose kinsman left him watcher o'er
 his wife
 And two fair babes, and went to dis-
 tant lands ;
 Was one year gone, and on returning
 found
 Not two but three : there lay the
 reckling, one
 But one hour old ! What said the
 happy sire ?
 A seven months' babe had been a
 truer gift.
 Those twelve sweet moons confused
 his fatherhood.”

Then answer'd Merlin “ Nay, I
 know the tale.
 Sir Valence wedded with an outland
 dame :
 Some cause had kept him sunder'd
 from his wife :
 One child they had : it lived with
 her : she died
 His kinsman travelling on his own
 affair
 Was charged by Valence to bring
 home the child.
 He brought, not found it therefore :
 take the truth.

“ O ay,” said Vivien, “ overtrue a
 tale.
 What say ye then to sweet Sir Sagra-
 more,
 That ardent man ? ‘ to pluck the
 flower in season ; ’
 So says the song, ‘ I trow it is no
 treason.’
 O Master, shall we call him overquick
 To crop his own sweet rose before the
 hour ? ”

And Merlin answer'd “ Overquick
 are you

To catch a lothly plume fall'n from
 the wing
 Of that foul bird of rapine whose
 whole prey
 Is man's good name : he never
 wrong'd his bride.
 I know the tale. An angry gust of
 wind
 Puff'd out his torch among the myriad-
 room'd
 And many-corridor'd complexities
 Of Arthur's palace : then he found a
 door
 And darkling felt the sculptured orna-
 ment
 That wreathen round it made it seem
 his own ;
 And wearied out made for the couch
 and slept,
 A stainless man beside a stainless
 maid ;
 And either slept, nor knew of other
 there ;
 Till the high dawn piercing the royal
 rose
 In Arthur's casement glimmer'd
 chastely down,
 Blushing upon them blushing, and at
 once
 He rose without a word and parted
 from her :
 But when the thing was blazed about
 the court,
 The brute world howling forced them
 into bonds,
 And as it chanced they are happy,
 being pure.”

“ O ay,” said Vivien, “ that were
 likely too.
 What say ye then to fair Sir Percivale
 And of the horrid foulness that he
 wrought,
 The saintly youth, the spotless lamb
 of Christ,
 Or some black wether of St. Satan's
 fold.
 What, in the precincts of the chapel-
 yard,
 Among the knightly brasses of the
 graves,
 And by the cold Hic Jacets of the
 dead ! ”

And Merlin answer'd careless of her charge.

A sober man is Percivale and pure ;
But once in life was fluster'd with new wine,

Then paced for coolness in the chapel-yard ;

Where one of Satan's shepherdesses caught

And meant to stamp him with her master's mark ;

And that he sinn'd, is not believable ;
For, look upon his face !—but if he sinn'd,

The sin that practice burns into the blood,

And not the one dark hour which brings remorse,

Will brand us, after, of whose fold we be :

Or else were he, the holy king, whose hymns

Are chanted in the minster, worse than all,

But is your spleen froth'd out, or have ye more ? ”

And Vivien answer'd frowning yet in wrath ;

“ O ay ; what say ye to Sir Lancelot, friend ?

Traitor or true ? that commerce with the Queen,

I ask you, is it clamour'd by the child,
Or whisper'd in the corner ? do you know it ? ”

To which he answer'd sadly, “ Yea, I know it.

Sir Lancelot went ambassador at first,
To fetch her, and she took him for the King ;

So fixt her fancy on him : let him be.
But have you no one word of loyal praise

For Arthur, blameless King and stainless man ? ”

She answer'd with a low and chuckling laugh ;

“ Him ? is he man at all, who knows and winks ?

Sees what his fair bride is and does, and winks ?

By which the good king means to blind himself,

And blinds himself and all the Table Round

To all the foulness that they work. Myself

Could call him (were it not for womanhood)

The pretty, popular name such manhood earns,

Could call him the main cause of all their crime ;

Yea, were he not crown'd king, coward, and fool.”

Then Merlin to his own heart, loathing, said ;

“ O true and tender ! O my liege and king !

O selfless man and stainless gentleman,

Who would'st against thine own eye-witness fain

Have all men true and leal, all women pure ;

How, in the mouths of base interpreters,

From over-fineness not intelligible

To things with every sense as false and foul

As the poach'd filth that floods the middle street,

Is thy white blamelessness accounted blame ! ”

But Vivien deeming Merlin overborne

By instance, recommenced, and let her tongue

Rage like a fire among the noblest names,

Polluting, and imputing her whole self,

Defaming and defacing, till she left

Not even Lancelot brave, nor Gala-had clean.

Her words had issue other than she will'd.

He dragg'd his eyebrow bushes down, and made

A snowy penthouse for his hollow eyes,

And mutter'd in himself, "tell *her* the charm!
 So, if she had it, would she rail on me
 To snare the next, and if she have it not,
 So will she rail. What did the wanton say?
 'Not mount as high;' we scarce can sink as low:
 For men at most differ as Heaven and earth,
 But women, worst and best, as Heaven and Hell.
 I know the Table Round, my friends of old;
 All brave, and many generous, and some chaste.
 I think she cloaks the wounds of loss with lies;
 I do believe she tempted them and fail'd,
 She is so bitter: for fine plots may fail,
 Tho' harlots paint their talk as well as face
 With colours of the heart that are not theirs.
 I will not let her know: nine tithes of times
 Face-flatterers and backbiters are the same.
 And they, sweet soul, that most impute a crime
 Are pronest to it, and impute themselves,
 Wanting the mental range; or low desire
 Not to feel lowest makes them level all;
 Yea, they would pare the mountain to the plain,
 To leave an equal baseness; and in this
 Are harlots like the crowd, that if they find
 Some stain or blemish in a name of note,
 Not grieving that their greatest are so small,
 Inflate themselves with some insane delight,
 And judge all nature from her feet of clay,
 Without the will to lift their eyes, and see
 Her godlike head crown'd with spiritual fire,
 And touching other worlds. I am weary of her."

 He spoke in words part heard, in whispers part,
 Half-suffocated in the hoary fell
 And many-winter'd fleece of throat and chin.
 But Vivien, gathering somewhat of his mood,
 And hearing "harlot" mutter'd twice or thrice,
 Leapt from her session on his lap, and stood
 Stiff as a viper frozen; loathsome sight,
 How from the rosy lips of life and love,
 Flash'd the bare-grinning skeleton of death!
 White was her cheek; sharp breaths of anger puff'd
 Her fairy nostril out; her hand half-clench'd
 Went faltering sideways downward to her belt,
 And feeling; had she found a dagger there
 (For in a wink the false love turns to hate)
 She would have stabb'd him; but she found it not:
 His eye was calm, and suddenly she took
 To bitter weeping like a beaten child,
 A long, long weeping, not consolable.
 Then her false voice made way broker with sobs.

 "O crueller than was ever told in tale,
 Or sung in song! O vainly lavish'd love!
 O cruel, there was nothing wild or strange,
 Or seeming shameful, for what shame in love,
 So love be true, and not as yours is—nothing

Poor Vivien had not done to win his trust
 Who call'd her what he call'd her—all her crime,
 All—all—the wish to prove him wholly hers."

She mused a little, and then clapt her hands
 Together with a wailing shriek, and said :
 " Stabb'd through the heart's affections to the heart !
 Seeth'd like the kid in its own mother's milk !
 Kill'd with a word worse than a life of blows !
 I thought that he was gentle, being great :
 O God, that I had loved a smaller man !
 I should have found in him a greater heart.
 O, I, that flattering my true passion, saw
 The knights, the court, the king, dark in your light,
 Who loved to make men darker than they are,
 Because of that high pleasure which I had
 To seat you sole upon my pedestal
 Of worship—I am answer'd, and henceforth
 The course of life that seem'd so flowery to me
 With you for guide and master, only you,
 Becomes the sea-cliff pathway broken short,
 And ending in a ruin—nothing left,
 But into some low cave to crawl, and there,
 If the wolf spare me, weep my life away,
 Kill'd with inutterable unkindliness."

She paused, she turn'd away, she hung her head,
 The snake of gold slid from her hair, the braid
 Slipt and uncoil'd itself, she wept afresh,

And the dark wood grew darker toward the storm
 In silence, while his anger slowly died
 Within him, till he let his wisdom go
 For ease of heart, and half believed her true :
 Call'd her to shelter in the hollow oak,
 " Come from the storm " and having no reply,
 Gazed at the heaving shoulder, and the face
 Hand-hidden, as for utmost grief or shame ;
 Then thrice essay'd, by tenderest-touching terms
 To sleek her ruffled peace of mind, in vain.
 At last she let herself be conquer'd by him,
 And as the cageling newly flown returns,
 The seeming-injured simple-hearted thing
 Came to her old perch back, and settled there.
 There while she sat, half-falling from his knees,
 Half-nestled at his heart, and since he saw
 The slow tear creep from her closed eyelid yet,
 About her, more in kindness than in love,
 The gentle wizard cast a shielding arm.
 But she dislink'd herself at once and rose,
 Her arms upon her breast across, and stood
 A virtuous gentlewoman deeply wrong'd,
 Upright and flush'd before him : then she said :

" There must be now no passages of love
 Betwixt us twain henceforward evermore.
 Since, if I be what I am grossly call'd,
 What should be granted which your own gross heart
 Would reckon worth the taking ? I will go.

In truth, but one thing now—better
 have died
 Thrice than have ask'd it once—
 could make me stay—
 That proof of trust—so often ask'd
 in vain!
 How justly, after that vile term of
 yours,
 I find with grief! I might believe
 you then,
 Who knows? once more. O, what was
 once to me
 Mere matter of the fancy, now has
 grown
 The vast necessity of heart and life.
 Farewell; think kindly of me, for I
 fear
 My fate or fault, omitting gayer youth
 For one so old, must be to love you
 still.
 But ere I leave you let me swear once
 more
 That if I schemed against your peace
 in this,
 May you just heaven, that darkens
 o'er me, send
 One flash, that, missing all things
 else, may make
 My scheming brain a cinder, if I lie."

Scarce had she ceased, when out of
 heaven a bolt
 (For now the storm was close above
 them) struck,
 Furrowing a giant oak, and javelining
 With darted spikes and splinters of
 the wood
 The dark earth round. He raised his
 eyes and saw
 The tree that shone white-listed thro'
 the gloom.
 But Vivien, fearing heaven had heard
 her oath,
 And dazzled by the livid-flickering
 fork,
 And deafen'd with the stammering
 cracks and claps
 That follow'd, flying back and crying
 out,
 "O Merlin, tho' you do not love me,
 save,
 Yet save me!" clung to him and
 hugg'd him close;

And call'd him dear protector in her
 fright,
 Nor yet forgot her practice in her
 fright,
 But wrought upon his mood and
 hugg'd him close.
 The pale blood of the wizard at her
 touch
 Took gayer colours, like an opal
 warm'd.
 She blamed herself for telling hearsay
 tales;
 She shook from fear, and for her fault
 she wept
 Of petulancy; she call'd him lord
 and liege,
 Her seer, her bard, her silver star of
 eve,
 Her God, her Merlin, the one pas-
 sionate love
 Of her whole life; and ever over-
 head
 Bellow'd the tempest, and the rotten
 branch
 Snapt in the rushing of the river-rain
 Above them; and in change of glare
 and gloom
 Her eyes and neck glittering went
 and came;
 Till now the storm, its burst of pas-
 sion spent,
 Moaning and calling out of other
 lands,
 Had left the ravaged woodland yet
 once more
 To peace; and what should not have
 been had been,
 For Merlin, overtalk'd and overworn,
 Had yielded, told her all the charm,
 and slept.

Then, in one moment, she put forth
 the charm
 Of woven paces and of waving hands,
 And in the hollow oak he lay as dead,
 And lost to life and use and name
 and fame.

Then crying "I have made his
 glory mine,"
 And shrieking out "O fool!" the
 harlot leapt

Adown the forest, and the thicket closed
 Behind her, and the forest echo'd "fool,"
 Broke the strong lance, and roll'd his enemy down,
 And saved him: so she lived in fantasy.

ELAINE

ELAINE the fair, Elaine the loveable,
 Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat,
 High in her chamber up a tower to the east
 Guarded the sacred shield of Lancelot;
 Which first she placed where morning's earliest ray
 Might strike it, and awake her with the gleam;
 Then fearing rust or soilure fashion'd for it
 A case of silk, and braided thereupon
 All the devices blazon'd on the shield
 In their own tinct, and added, of her wit,
 A border fantasy of branch and flower,
 And yellow-throated nestling in the nest,
 Nor rested thus content, but day by day
 Leaving her household and good father climb'd
 That eastern tower, and entering barr'd her door,
 Stript off the case, and read the naked shield,
 Now guess'd a hidden meaning in his arms,
 Now made a pretty history to herself
 Of every dint a sword had beaten in it,
 And every scratch a lance had made upon it,
 Conjecturing when and where: this cut is fresh;
 That ten years back; this dealt him at Caerlyle;
 That at Caerleon; this at Camelot:
 And ah God's mercy what a stroke was there!
 And here a thrust that might have kill'd, but God

How came the lily maid by that good shield
 Of Lancelot, she that knew not ev'n his name?
 He left it with her, when he rode to tilt
 For the great diamond in the diamond jousts,
 Which Arthur had ordain'd, and by that name
 Had named them, since a diamond was the prize.

For Arthur when none knew from whence he came,
 Long ere the people chose him for their king,
 Roving the trackless realms of Lyonesse,
 Had found a glen, gray boulder and black tarn.
 A horror lived about the tarn, and clave
 Like its own mists to all the mountain side:
 For here two brothers, one a king, had met
 And fought together; but their names were lost.
 And each had slain his brother at a blow,
 And down they fell and made the glen abhorr'd:
 And there they lay till all their bones were bleach'd,
 And lichen'd into colour with the crags:
 And he, that once was king, had on a crown
 Of diamonds, one in front, and four aside.
 And Arthur came, and labouring up the pass
 All in a misty moonshine, unawares
 Had trodden that crown'd skeleton, and the skull
 Brake from the nape, and from the skull the crown

Roll'd into light, and turning on its
rims
Fled like a glittering rivulet to the
tarn :
And down the shingly scaur he
plunged, and caught,
And set it on his head, and in his
heart
Heard murmurs " lo, thou likewise
shalt be king."

Thereafter, when a king, he had
the gems
Pluck'd from the crown, and show'd
them to his knights,
Saying " these jewels, whereupon I
chanced
Divinely, are the kingdom's not the
king's—
For public use : henceforward let
there be,
Once every year, a joust for one of
these :
For so by nine years' proof we needs
must learn
Which is our mightiest, and ourselves
shall grow
In use of arms and manhood, till we
drive
The Heathen, who, some say, shall
rule the land
Hereafter, which God hinder." Thus
he spoke :
And eight years past, eight jousts had
been, and still
Had Lancelot won the diamond of
the year,
With purpose to present them to the
Queen,
When all were won ; but meaning all
at once
To snare her royal fancy with a boon
Worth half her realm, had never
spoken word.

Now for the central diamond and
the last
And largest, Arthur, holding then his
court
Hard on the river nigh the place
which now
Is this world's hugest, let proclaim
a joust

At Camelot, and when the time drew
nigh
Spake (for she had been sick) to
Guinevere
" Arc you so sick, my Queen, you
cannot move
To these fair jousts ? " " Yea, lord,"
she said, " you know it."
" Then will you miss," he answer'd,
" the great deeds
Of Lancelot, and his prowess in the
lists,
A sight you love to look on." And
the Queen
Lifted her eyes, and they dwelt
languidly
On Lancelot, where he stood beside
the King.
He thinking that he read her mean-
ing there,
" Stay with me, I am sick ; my love
is more
Than many diamonds," yielded, and
a heart,
Love-loyal to the least wish of the
Queen
(However much he yearn'd to make
complete
The tale of diamonds for his destined
boon)
Urged him to speak against the
truth, and say,
" Sir King, mine ancient wound is
hardly whole,
And lets me from the saddle ; " and
the King
Glanced first at him, then her, and
went his way.
No sooner gone than suddenly she
began.

" To blame, my lord Sir Lancelot,
much to blame,
Why go you not to these fair jousts ?
the knights
Are half of them our enemies, and the
crowd
Will murmur, lo the shameless ones,
who take
Their pastime now the trustful king
is gone ! "
Then Lancelot vext at having lied in
vain :

"Are you so wise? you were not once
 so wise,
 My Queen, that summer, when you
 loved me first.
 Then of the crowd you took no more
 account
 Than of the myriad cricket of the
 mead,
 When its own voice clings to each
 blade of grass,
 And every voice is nothing. As to
 knights,
 Them surely can I silence with all
 ease.
 But now my loyal worship is allow'd
 Of all men: many a bard, without
 offence,
 Has link'd our names together in his
 lay,
 Lancelot, the flower of bravery,
 Guinevere,
 The pearl of beauty: and our knights
 at least
 Have pledged us in this union, while
 the king
 Would listen smiling. How then?
 is there more?
 Has Arthur spoken aught? or would
 yourself,
 Now weary of my service and devoir,
 Henceforth be truer to your faultless
 lord?"

She broke into a little scornful
 laugh.
 "Arthur, my lord, Arthur, the fault-
 less King,
 That passionate perfection, my good
 lord—
 But who can gaze upon the Sun in
 heaven?
 He never spake word of reproach to
 me,
 He never had a glimpse of mine un-
 truth,
 He cares not for me: only here to-
 day
 There gleam'd a vague suspicion in
 his eyes:
 Some meddling rogue has tamper'd
 with him—else
 Rapt in this fancy of his Table Round,
 And swearing men to vows impossible,

To make them like himself: but,
 friend, to me
 He is all fault who hath no fault at
 all:
 For who loves me must have a touch
 of earth;
 The low sun makes the colour: I am
 yours,
 Not Arthur's, as you know, save by
 the bond.
 And therefore hear my words: go to
 the jousts:
 The tiny-trumpeting gnat can break
 our dream
 When sweetest; and the vermin voices
 here
 May buzz so loud—we scorn them,
 but they sting."

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief
 of knights.
 "And with what face, after my pre-
 text made,
 Shall I appear, O Queen, at Camelot,
 I
 Before a king who honours his own
 word,
 As if it were his God's?"

"Yea," said the Queen,
 "A moral child without the craft to
 rule,
 Else had he not lost me: but listen
 to me,
 If I must find you wit: we hear it
 said
 That men go down before your spear
 at a touch
 But knowing you are Lancelot; your
 great name,
 This conquers: hide it therefore; go
 unknown:
 Win I by this kiss you will: and our
 true king
 Will then allow your pretext, O my
 knight,
 As all for glory; for to speak him
 true,
 You know right well, how meek soe'er
 he seem,
 No keener hunter after glory breathes.
 He loves it in his knights more than
 himself:

They prove to him his work : win and return.'

Then got Sir Lancelot suddenly to horse,
Wroth at himself : not willing to be known,
He left the barren-beaten thoroughfare,
Chose the green path that show'd the rarer foot,
And there among the solitary downs,
Full often lost in fancy, lost his way ;
Till as he traced a faintly-shadow'd track,
That all in loops and links among the dales
Ran to the Castle of Astolat, he saw
Fired from the west, far on a hill, the towers.
Thither he made and wound the gateway horn.
Then came an old, dumb, myriad-wrinkled man,
Who let him into lodging and disarm'd.
And Lancelot marvell'd at the wordless man ;
And issuing found the Lord of Astolat
With two strong sons, Sir Torre and Sir Lavaine,
Moving to meet him in the castle court ;
And close behind them sept the lily maid
Elaine, his daughter : mother of the house
There was not : some light jest among them rose
With laughter dying down as the great knight
Approach'd them : then the Lord of Astolat.
" Whence comest thou, my guest, and by what name
Livest between the lips ? for by thy state
And presence I might guess thee chief of those,
After the king, who eat in Arthur's halls.
Him have I seen : the rest, his Table Round,

Known as they are, to me they are unknown."

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of knights.
" Known am I, and of Arthur's hall, and known,
What I by mere mischance have brought, my shield.
But since I go to joust as one unknown
At Camelot for the diamond, ask me not,
Hereafter you shall know me—and the shield—
I pray you lend me one, if such you have,
Blank, or at least with some device not mine."

Then said the Lord of Astolat,
" Here is Torre's :
Hurt in his first tilt was my son, Sir Torre.
And so, God wot, his shield is blank enough.
His you can have." Then added plain Sir Torre,
" Yea since I cannot use it, you may have it."
Here laugh'd the father saying " Fie, Sir Churl,
Is that an answer for a noble knight ?
Allow him : but Lavaine, my younger here,
He is so full of lustihood, he will ride,
Joust for it, and win, and bring it in an hour
And set it in this damsel's golden hair,
To make her thrice as wilful as before."

" Nay, father, nay good father, shame me not
Before this noble knight " said young Lavaine
" For nothing. Surely I but play'd on Torre :
He seem'd so sullen, vext he could not go :
A jest, no more : for, knight, the maiden dreamt
That some one put this diamond in her hand,

And that it was too slippery to be held,
 And slipt and fell into some pool or stream,
 The castle-well, belike; and then I said
 That *if* I went and *if* I fought and won it
 (But all was jest and joke among ourselves)
 Then must she keep it safelier. All was jest.
 But father give me leave, an if he will,
 To ride to Camelot with this noble knight:
 Win shall I not, but do my best to win:
 Young as I am, yet would I do my best."

"So you will grace me," answer'd Lancelot,
 Smiling a moment, "with your fellowship
 O'er these waste downs whercon I lost myself,
 Then were I glad of you as guide and friend;
 And you shall win this diamond—as I hear,
 It is a fair large diamond,—if you may,
 And yield it to this maiden, if you will,"
 "A fair large diamond," added plain Sir Torre,
 "Such be for Queens and not for simple maids."
 Then she, who held her eyes upon the ground,
 Elaine, and heard her name so tost about,
 Flush'd slightly at the slight disparagement
 Before the stranger knight, who, looking at her,
 Full courtly, yet not falsely, thus return'd.
 "If what is fair be but for what is fair,
 And only Queens are to be counted so,
 Rash were my judgment then, who deem this maid

Might wear as fair a jewel as is on earth,
 Not violating the bond of like to like."

He spoke and ceased: the lily maid Elaine,
 Won by the mellow voice before she look'd,
 Lifted her eyes, and read his lineaments.
 The great and guilty love he bare the Queen,
 In battle with the love he bare his lord,
 Had marr'd his face, and mark'd it ere his time.
 Another sinning on such heights with one,
 The flower of all the west and all the world,
 Had been the sleeker for it: but in him
 His mood was often like a fiend, and rose
 And drove him into wastes and solitudes
 For agony, who was yet a living soul.
 Marr'd as he was, he seem'd the goodliest man,
 That ever among ladies ate in Hall,
 And noblest, when she lifted up her eyes.
 However marr'd, of more than twice her years,
 Seam'd with an ancient swordcut on the cheek,
 And bruised and bronzed, she lifted up her eyes
 And loved him, with that love which was her doom.

Then the great knight, the darling of the court,
 Loved of the loveliest, into that rude hall
 Stept with all grace, and not with half disdain
 Hid under grace, as in a smaller time,
 But kindly man moving among his kind:
 Whom they with meats and vintage of their best
 And talk and minstrel melody entertain'd.

And much they ask'd of court and
 Table Round,
 And ever well and readily answer'd
 he:
 But Lancelot, when they glanced at
 Guinevere,
 Suddenly speaking of the wordless
 man,
 Heard from the Baron that, ten years
 before,
 The heathen caught and reft him of
 his tongue.
 "He learnt and warn'd me of their
 fierce design
 Against my house, and him they
 caught and maim'd;
 But I my sons and little daughter fled
 From bonds or death, and dwelt
 among the woods
 By the great river in a boatman's hut.
 Dull days were those, till our good
 Arthur broke
 The Pagan yet once more on Badon
 hill."
 "O there, great Lord, doubtless,"
 Lavaine said, rapt
 By all the sweet and sudden passion
 of youth
 Toward greatness in its elder, "you
 have fought.
 O tell us—for we live apart—you
 know
 Of Arthur's glorious wars." And
 Lancelot spoke
 And answer'd him at full, as having
 been
 With Arthur in the fight which all
 day long
 Rang by the white mouth of the
 violent Glem;
 And in the four wild battles by the
 shore
 Of Douglas; that on Bassa; then the
 war
 That thunder'd in and out the gloomy
 skirts
 Of Celidon the forest; and again
 By castle Gurnion where the glorious
 King
 Had on his cuirass worn our Lady's
 Head,
 Carved of one emerald, center'd in a
 sun
 Of silver rays, that lighten'd as he
 breathed;
 And at Caerleon had he help'd his
 lord,
 When the strong neighings of the
 wild white Horse
 Set every gilded parapet shudder-
 ing;
 And up in Agned Cathregonion too,
 And down the waste sand-shores of
 Trath Treroit,
 Where many a heathen fell; "and
 on the mount
 Of Badon I myself beheld the King
 Charge at the head of all his Table
 Round,
 And all his legions crying Christ and
 him,
 And break them; and I saw him,
 after, stand
 High on a heap of slain, from spur to
 plume
 Red as the rising sun with heathen
 blood,
 And seeing me, with a great voice he
 cried
 'They are broken, they are broken'
 for the King,
 However mild he seems at home, nor
 cares
 For triumph in our mimic wars, the
 jousts—
 For if his own knight cast him down,
 he laughs
 Saying, his knights are better men
 than he—
 Yet in this heathen war the fire of
 God
 Fills him: I never saw his like: there
 lives
 No greater leader."
 While he utter'd this,
 Low to her own heart said the lily
 maid
 "Save your great self, fair lord;"
 and when he fell
 From talk of war to traits of plea-
 santry—
 Being mirthful he but in a stately
 kind—
 She still took note that when the
 living smile
 Died from his lips, across him came
 a cloud

Of melancholy severe, from which
 again,
 Whenever in her hovering to and fro
 The lily maid had striven to make him
 cheer,
 There brake a sudden-beaming tender-
 ness
 Of manners and of nature: and she
 thought
 That all was nature, all, perchance
 for her.
 And all night long his face before her
 lived,
 As when a painter, poring on a face,
 Divinely thro' all hindrance finds the
 man
 Behind it, and so paints him that his
 face,
 The shape and colour of a mind and
 life,
 Lives for his children, ever at its
 best
 And fullest; so the face before her
 lived,
 Dark-splendid, speaking in the silence,
 full
 Of noble things, and held her from
 her sleep.
 Till rathe she rose, half-cheated in the
 thought
 She needs must bid farewell to sweet
 Lavaine.
 First as in fear, step after step, she
 stole
 Down the long tower-stairs, hesitat-
 ing:
 Anon, she heard Sir Lancelot cry in
 the court,
 "This shield, my friend, where is
 it?" and Lavaine
 Past inward, as she came from out
 the tower.
 There to his proud horse Lancelot
 turn'd, and smooth'd
 The glossy shoulder, humming to
 himself.
 Half-envious of the flattering hand,
 she drew
 Nearer and stood. He look'd, and
 more amazed
 Than if seven men had set upon him,
 saw
 The maiden standing in the dewy
 light.

He had not dream'd she was so beau-
 tiful.
 Then came on him a sort of sacred
 fear,
 For silent, tho' he greeted her, she
 stood
 Rapt on his face as if it were a God's,
 Suddenly flash'd on her a wild desire,
 That he should wear her favour at the
 tilt.
 She braved a riotous heart in asking
 for it.
 "Fair lord, whose name I know not
 —noble it is,
 I well believe, the noblest—will you
 wear
 My favour at this tourney?" "Nay,"
 said he,
 "Fair lady, since I never yet have
 worn
 Favour of any lady in the lists.
 Such is my wont, as those, who know
 me, know."
 "Yea, so," she answer'd; "then in
 wearing mine
 Needs must be lesser likelihood, noble
 lord,
 That those who know should know
 you." And he turn'd
 Her counsel up and down within his
 mind,
 And found it true, and answer'd,
 "true, my child.
 Well, I will wear it: fetch it out to
 me."
 What is it? "and she told him "a
 red sleeve
 Broider'd with pearls," and brought
 it: then he bound
 Her token on his helmet, with a smile
 Saying, "I never yet have done so
 much
 For any maiden living," and the
 blood
 Sprang to her face and fill'd her with
 delight;
 But left her all the paler, when
 Lavaine
 Returning brought the yet-unblazon'd
 shield,
 His brother's; which he gave to
 Lancelot,
 Who parted with his own to fair
 Elaine;

"Do me this grace, my child, to have
 my shield
 In keeping till I come." "A grace
 to me,"
 She answer'd, "twice to-day. I am
 your Squire."
 Whereat Lavaine said, laughing,
 "Lily maid,
 For fear our people call you lily maid
 In earnest, let me bring your colour
 back;
 Once, twice, and thrice: now get you
 hence to bed:"
 So kiss'd her, and Sir Lancelot his
 own hand,
 And thus they moved away: she
 stay'd a minute,
 Then made a sudden step to the gate,
 and there—
 Her bright hair blown about the
 serious face
 Yet rosy-kindled with her brother's
 kiss—
 Paused in the gateway, standing by
 the shield
 In silence, while she watch'd their
 arms far-off
 Sparkle, until they dipt below the
 downs.
 Then to her tower she climb'd, and
 took the shield,
 There kept it, and so lived in fantasy.

Meanwhile the new companions
 past away
 Far o'er the long backs of the bushless
 downs,
 To where Sir Lancelot knew there
 lived a knight
 Not far from Camelot, now for forty
 years
 A hermit, who had pray'd, labour'd
 and pray'd
 And ever labouring had scoop'd him-
 self
 In the white rock a chapel and a hall
 On massive columns, like a shorecliff
 cave,
 And cells and chambers: all were
 fair and dry;
 The green light from the meadows
 underneath
 Struck up and lived along the milky
 roofs;

And in the meadows tremulous aspen-
 trees
 And poplars made a noise of falling
 showers.
 And thither wending there that night
 they bode.

But when the next day broke from
 underground,
 And shot red fire and shadows thro'
 the cave,
 They rose, heard mass, broke fast,
 and rode away:
 Then Lancelot saying, "hear, but
 hold my name
 Hidden, you ride with Lancelot of
 the Lake,"
 Abash'd Lavaine, whose instant
 reverence,
 Dearer to true hearts than their own
 praise,
 But left him leave to stammer, "is
 it indeed?"
 And after muttering "the great
 Lancelot"
 At last he got his breath and answer'd
 "One,
 One have I seen—that other, our
 liege lord,
 The dread Pendragon, Britain's
 king of kings,
 Of whom the people talk mysteri-
 ously,
 He will be there—then were I stricken
 blind
 That minute, I might say that I had
 seen."

So spake Lavaine, and when they
 reach'd the lists
 By Camelot in the meadow, let his
 eyes
 Run thro' the peopled gallery which
 half round
 Lay like a rainbow fall'n upon the
 grass,
 Until they found the clear-faced King,
 who sat
 Robed in red samite, easily to be
 known,
 Since to his crown the golden dragon
 clung,
 And down his robe the dragon writhed
 in gold,

And from the carven-work behind him
 crept
 Two dragons gilded, sloping down to
 make
 Arms for his chair, while all the rest
 of them
 Thro' knots and loops and folds
 innumerable
 Fled ever thro' the woodwork, till they
 found
 The new design wherein they lost
 themselves,
 Yet with all ease, so tender was the
 work :
 And, in the costly canopy o'er him
 set,
 Blazed the last diamond of the name-
 less king.
 Then Lancelot answer'd young La-
 vaine and said,
 "Me you call great : mine is the
 firmer seat,
 The truer lance ; but there is many a
 youth
 Now crescent, who will come to all I
 am
 And overcome it ; and in me there
 dwells
 No greatness, save it be some far-off
 touch
 Of greatness to know well I am not
 great :
 There is the man." And Lavaine
 gaped upon him
 As on a thing miraculous, and anon
 The trumpets blew ; and then did
 either side,
 They that assail'd, and they that
 held the lists,
 Set lance in rest, strike spur, sud-
 denly move,
 Meet in the midst, and there so fur-
 ously
 Shock, that a man far-off might well
 perceive,
 If any man that day were left afield,
 The hard earth shake, and a low
 thunder of arms.
 And Lancelot bode a little, till he
 saw
 Which were the weaker ; then he
 hurl'd into it
 Against the stronger : little need to
 speak

Of Lancelot in his glory : King, duke,
 earl,
 Count, baron—whom he smote, he
 overthrew.
 But in the field were Lancelot's
 kith and kin,
 Ranged with the Table Round that
 held the lists,
 Strong men, and wrathful that a
 stranger knight
 Should do and almost overdo the
 deeds
 Of Lancelot ; and one said to the
 other "Lo !
 What is he ? I do not mean the
 force alone,
 The grace and versatility of the man—
 Is it not Lancelot ! " "When has
 Lancelot worn
 Favour of any lady in the lists ?
 Not such his wont, as we, that know
 him, know."
 "How then ? who then ? " a fury
 seized on them,
 A fiery family passion for the name
 Of Lancelot, and a glory one with
 theirs.
 They couch'd their spears and prick'd
 their steeds and thus,
 Their plumes driv'n backward by the
 wind they made
 In moving, all together down upon
 him
 Bare, as a wild wave in the wide
 North-sea,
 Green-glimmering toward the sum-
 mit, bears, with all
 Its stormy crests that smoke against
 the skies,
 Down on a bark, and overbears the
 bark,
 And him that helms it, so they over-
 bore
 Sir Lancelot and his charger, and a
 spear
 Down-glancing lamed the charger,
 and a spear
 Prick'd sharply his own cuirass, and
 the head
 Pierced thro' his side, and there snapt,
 and remain'd.

Then Sir Lavaine did well and worshipfully ;
 He bore a knight of old repute to the earth,
 And brought his horse to Lancelot where he lay.
 He up the side, sweating with agony, got,
 But thought to do while he might yet endure,
 And being lustily holpen by the rest,
 His party,—tho' it seem'd half-miracle
 To those he fought with—drave his kith and kin
 And all the Table Round that held the lists,
 Back to the barrier ; then the heralds blew
 Proclaiming his the prize, who wore the sleeve
 Of scarlet, and the pearls ; and all the knights,
 His party, cried " Advance, and take your prize
 The diamond ; " but he answer'd, " diamond me
 No diamonds ! for God's love, a little air !
 Prize me no prizes, for my prize is death !
 Hence will I and I charge you, follow me not."

He spoke, and vanish'd suddenly from the field
 With young Lavaine into the poplar grove.
 There from his charger down he slid, and sat,
 Gasping to Sir Lavaine, " draw the lance-head : "
 " Ah my sweet lord Sir Lancelot," said Lavaine,
 " I dread me, if I draw it, you will die."
 But he " I die already with it : draw—
 Draw,"—and Lavaine drew, and that other gave
 A marvellous great shriek and ghastly groan,
 And half his blood burst forth, and down he sank

For the pure pain, and wholly swoon'd away.
 Then came the hermit out and bare him in,
 There stanch'd his wound ; and there, in daily doubt
 Whether to live or die, for many a week
 Hid from the wide world's rumour by the grove
 Of poplars with their noise of falling showers,
 And ever-tremulous aspen-trees, he lay.

But on that day when Lancelot fled the lists,
 His party, knights of utmost North and West,
 Lords of waste marches, kings of desolate isles,
 Came round their great Pendragon, saying to him
 " Lo, Sire, our knight thro' whom we won the day
 Hath gone sore wounded, and hath left his prize
 Untaken, crying that his prize is death."
 " Heaven hinder," said the King
 " that such an one,
 So great a knight as we have seen to-day—
 He seem'd to me another Lancelot—
 Yea, twenty times I thought him Lancelot—
 He must not pass uncared for, Gawain, rise,
 My nephew, and ride forth and find the knight.
 Wounded and wearied needs must he be near,
 I charge you that you get at once to horse.
 And knights and kings, there breathes not one of you
 Will deem this prize of ours is rashly given :
 His prowess was too wondrous. We will do him
 No customary honour : since the knight
 Came not to us, of us to claim the prize,

Ourselves will send it after. Where-
fore take
This diamond, and deliver it, and
return,
And bring us what he is and how he
fares,
And cease not from your quest, until
you find."

So saying from the carven flower
above,
To which it made a restless heart, he
took,
And gave, the diamond : then from
where he sat
At Arthur's right, with smiling face
arose,
With smiling face and frowning heart,
a Prince
In the mid might and flourish of his
May,
Gawain, surnamed The Courteous,
fair and strong,
And after Lancelot, Tristram, and
Geraint
And Lamorack, a good knight, but
therewithal
Sir Modred's brother, of a crafty
house,
Nor often loyal to his word, and now
Wroth that the king's command to
sally forth
In quest of whom he knew not, made
him leave
The banquet, and concourse of knights
and kings.

So all in wrath he got to horse and
went ;
While Arthur to the banquet, dark in
mood,
Past, thinking " is it Lancelot who
has come
Despite the wound he spake of, all for
gain
Of glory, and has added wound to
wound,
And ridd'n away to die ? " So fear'd
the King,
And, after two days' tarriance there,
return'd.
Then when he saw the Queen, em-
bracing ask'd,

" Love, are you yet so sick ? " " Nay,
Lord," she said.
" And where is Lancelot ? " Then
the Queen amazed
" Was he not with you ? won he not
your prize ? "
" Nay, but one like him." " Why
that like was he."

And when the King demanded how
she knew,
Said " Lord, no sooner had you
parted from us,
Than Lancelot told me of a common
talk
That men went down before his spear
at a touch,
But knowing he was Lancelot ; his
great name
Conquer'd ; and therefore would he
hide his name
From all men, ev'n the king, and to
this end
Had made the pretext of a hindering
wound,
That he might joust unknown of all,
and learn
If his old prowess were in aught de-
cay'd :
And added, ' our true Arthur, when
he learns,
Will well allow my pretext, as for gain
Of purer glory.' "

Then replied the King :
Far lovelier in our Lancelot had it
been,
In lieu of idly dallying with the truth,
To have trusted me as he has trusted
you.
Surely his king and most familiar
friend
Might well have kept his secret. True,
indeed,
Albeit I know my knights fantastical,
So fine a fear in our large Lancelot
Must needs have moved my laughter :
now remains
But little cause for laughter : his own
kin—
Ill news, my Queen, for all who love
him, these !
His kith and kin, not knowing, set
upon him ;

So that he went sore wounded from the field :
 Yet good news too : for goodly hopes are mine
 That Lancelot is no more a lonely heart.
 He wore, against his wont, upon his helm
 A sleeve of scarlet, broidered with great pearls,
 Some gentle maiden's gift."
 " Yea, lord," she said,
 " Your hopes are mine," and saying that she choked,
 And sharply turn'd about to hide her face,
 Moved to her chamber, and there flung herself
 Down on the great King's couch, and writhed upon it,
 And clench'd her fingers till they bit the palm,
 And shriek'd out " traitor " to the unhearing wall,
 Then flash'd into wild tears, and rose again,
 And moved about her palace, proud and pale.

 Gawain the while thro' all the region round
 Rode with his diamond, wearied of the quest,
 Touch'd at all points, except the poplar grove,
 And came at last, tho' late, to Astolat :
 Whom glittering in enamell'd arms the maid
 Glanced at, and cried " What news from Camelot, lord ?
 What of the knight with the red sleeve ? " " He won."
 " I knew it," she said. " But parted from the jousts
 Hurt in the side," whereat she caught her breath ;
 Thro' her own side she felt the sharp lance go ;
 Thereon she smote her hand : well-nigh she swoon'd :
 And, while he gazed wonderingly at her, came

 The lord of Astolat out, to whom the Prince
 Reported who he was, and on what quest
 Sent, that he bore the prize and could not find
 The victor, but had ridden wildly round
 To seek him, and was wearied of the search.
 To whom the lord of Astolat " Bide with us,
 And ride no longer wildly, noble Prince !
 Here was the knight, and here he left a shield ;
 This will he send or come for : further—
 more
 Our son is with him ; we shall hear anon,
 Needs must we hear." To this the courteous Prince
 Accorded with his wonted courtesy,
 Courtesy with a touch of traitor in it,
 And stay'd ; and cast his eyes on fair Elaine :
 Where could be found face daintier ? then her shape
 From forehead down to foot perfect—again
 From foot to forehead exquisitely turn'd :
 " Well—if I bide, lo ! this wild flower for me ! "
 And oft they met among the garden yews,
 And there he set himself to play upon her
 With sallying wit, free flashes from a height
 Above her, graces of the court, and songs,
 Sighs, and slow smiles, and golden eloquence
 And amorous adulation, till the maid
 Rebell'd against it, saying to him,
 " Prince,
 O loyal nephew of our noble King,
 Why ask you not to see the shield he left,
 Whence you might learn his name ?
 Why slight your King,
 And lose the quest he sent you on, and prove

No surer than our falcon yesterday,
 Who lost the hern we slipt him at,
 and went
 To all the winds ? " " Nay, by mine
 head," said he,
 " I lose it, as we lose the lark in
 heaven,
 O damsel, in the light of your blue
 eyes :
 But an you will it let me see the
 shield."
 And when the shield was brought,
 and Gawain saw
 Sir Lancelot's azure lions, crown'd
 with gold,
 Ramp in the field, hesmote his thigh,
 and mock'd ;
 " Right was the King ! our Lancelot !
 that true man !"
 " And right was I," she answer'd
 merrily, " I,
 Who dream'd my knight the greatest
 knight of all."
 " And if I dream'd," said Gawain,
 " that you love
 This greatest knight, your pardon !
 lo, you know it !
 Speak therefore : shall I waste myself
 in vain ? "
 Full simple was her answer " What
 know I ?
 My brethren have been all my fellow-
 ship,
 And I, when often they have talk'd
 of love,
 Wish'd it had been my mother, for
 they talk'd,
 Meseem'd, of what they knew not ;
 so myself—
 I know not if I know what true love
 is,
 But if I know, then, if I love not him,
 Methinks there is none other I can
 love."
 " Yea, by God's death," said he,
 " you love him well,
 But would not, knew you what all
 others know,
 And whom he loves." " So be it,"
 cried Elaine,
 And lifted her fair face and moved
 away :
 But he pursued her calling " Stay a
 little !

One golden minute's grace : he wore
 your sleeve :
 Would he break faith with one I may
 not name ?
 Must our true man change like a leaf
 at last ?
 Nay—like enough : why then, far be
 it from me
 To cross our mighty Lancelot in his
 loves !
 And, damsel, for I deem you know full
 well
 Where your great knight is hidden,
 let me leave
 My quest with you ; the diamond
 also : here !
 For if you love, it will be sweet to
 give it ;
 And if he love, it will be sweet to have
 it
 From your own hand ; and whether
 he love or not,
 A diamond is a diamond. Fare you
 well
 thousand times !—a thousand
 times farewell !
 Yet, if he love, and his love hold, we
 two
 May meet at court hereafter : there,
 I think,
 So you will learn the courtesies of the
 court,
 We two shall know each other."
 Then he gave,
 And slightly kiss'd the hand to which
 he gave,
 The diamond, and all wearied of the
 quest
 Leapt on his horse, and carolling as he
 went
 A true-love ballad, lightly rode
 away.
 Thence to the court he past ; there
 told the King
 What the King knew " Sir Lancelot
 is the knight."
 And added " Sire, my liege, so much
 I learnt ;
 But fail'd to find him tho' I rode all
 round
 The region : but I lighted on the
 maid,

Whose sleeve he wore; she loves him; and to her,
Deeming our courtesy is the truest law,
I gave the diamond: she will render it;
For by mine head she knows his hiding-place."

The seldom-frowning King frown'd, and replied,
"Too courteous truly! you shall go no more
On quest of mine, seeing that you forget
Obedience is the courtesy due to kings."

He spake and parted. Wroth but all in awe,
For twenty strokes of the blood, without a word,
Linger'd that other, staring after him;
Then shook his hair, strode off, and buzz'd abroad
About the maid of Astolat, and her love.
All ears were prick'd at once, all tongues were loosed:
"The maid of Astolat loves Sir Lancelot,
Sir Lancelot loves the maid of Astolat."
Some read the King's face, some the Queen's, and all
Had marvel what the maid might be, but most
Predoom'd her as unworthy. One old dame
Came suddenly on the Queen with the sharp news.
She, that had heard the noise of it before,
But sorrowing Lancelot should have stoop'd so low,
Marr'd her friend's point with pale tranquillity.
So ran the tale like fire about the court,
Fire in dry stubble a nine days' wonder flared:
Till ev'n the knights at banquet twice or thrice

Forgot to drink to Lancelot and the Queen,
And pledging Lancelot and the lily maid
Smiled at each other, while the Queen who sat
With lips severely placid felt the knot
Climb in her throat, and with her feet unseen
Crush'd the wild passion out against the floor
Beneath the banquet, where the meats became
As wormwood, and she hated all who pledged.

But far away the maid in Astolat,
Her guiltless rival, she that ever kept
The one-day-seen Sir Lancelot in her heart,
Crept to her father, while he mused alone,
Sat on his knee, stroked his gray face and said,
"Father, you call me wilful, and the fault
Is yours who let me have my will, and now,
Sweet father, will you let me lose my wits?"
"Nay," said he, "surely." "Wherefore, let me hence,"
She answer'd, "and find out our dear Lavaine."
"You will not lose your wits for dear Lavaine:
Bide," answer'd he: "we needs must hear anon
Of him, and of that other." "Ay," she said,
"And of that other, for I needs must hence
And find that other, wheresoe'er he be,
And with mine own hand give his diamond to him,
Lest I be found as faithless in the quest
As yon proud Prince who left the quest to me.
Sweet father, I behold him in my dreams
Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,

Death-pale, for lack of gentle maiden's aid.

The gentler-born the maiden, the more bound,

My father, to be sweet and serviceable
To noble knights in sickness, as you know,

When these have worn their tokens :
let me hence

I pray you." Then her father nod-
ding said,

" Ay, ay, the diamond : wit you well,
my child,

Right fain were I to learn this knight
were whole,

Being our greatest : yea, and you
must give it

And sure I think this fruit is hung too
high

For any mouth to gape for save a
Queen's—

Nay, I mean nothing : so then, get
you gone,

Being so very wilful you must go."

Lightly, her suit allow'd, she slept
away,

And while she made her ready for her
ride,

Her father's latest word humm'd in
her ear,

" Being so very wilful you must go,"
And changed itself and echoed in her
heart,

" Being so very wilful you must die."
But she was happy enough and shook
it off,

As we shake off the bee that buzzes
at us ;

And in her heart she answer'd it and
said,

" What matter, so I help him back
to life ? "

Then far away with good Sir Torre
for guide

Rode o'er the long backs of the bush-
less downs

To Camelot, and before the city-
gates

Came on her brother with a happy face
Making a roan horse caper and curvet

For pleasure all about a field of
flowers :

Whom when she saw, " Lavaine,"
she cried, " Lavaine,

How fares my lord Sir Lancelot ? "
He amazed,

" Torre and Elaine ! why here ? Sir
Lancelot !

How know you my lord's name is
Lancelot ? "

But when the maid had told him all
her tale,

Then turn'd Sir Torre, and being in
his moods

Left them, and under the strange-
statued gate,

Where Arthur's wars were render'd
mystically,

Past up the still rich city to his kin,
His own far blood, which dwelt at
Camelot ;

And her, Lavaine across the poplar
grove

Led to the caves : there first she saw
the casque

Of Lancelot on the wall : her scarlet
sleeve,

Tho' carved and cut, and half the
pearls away,

Stream'd from it still ; and in her
heart she laugh'd,

Because he had not loosed it from his
helm,

But meant once more perchance to
tourney in it.

And when they gain'd the cell in
which he slept,

His battle-writhen arms and mighty
hands

Lay naked on the wolfskin, and a
dream

Of dragging down his enemy made
them move.

Then she that saw him lying unsleek,
unshorn,

Gaunt as it were the skeleton of him-
self,

Uttered a little tender dolorous cry.
The sound not wonted in a place so
still

Woke the sick knight, and while he
roll'd his eyes

Yet blank from sleep, she started to
him, saying

" Your prize the diamond sent you
by the King : "

His eyes glisten'd : she fancied " is it
 for me ? "

And when the maid had told him all
 the tale
 Of King and Prince, the diamond
 sent, the quest
 Assign'd to her not worthy of it, she
 knelt
 Full lowly by the corners of his bed,
 And laid the diamond in his open
 hand.
 Her face was near, and as we kiss the
 child
 That does the task assign'd, he kiss'd
 her face.
 At once she slept like water to the
 floor.
 " Alas," he said, " your ride has
 wearied you.
 Rest must you have." " No rest for
 me," she said ;
 " Nay, for near you, fair lord, I am
 at rest."
 What might she mean by that ? his
 large black eyes,
 Yet larger thro' his leanness, dwelt
 upon her,
 Till all her heart's sad secret blazed
 itself
 In the heart's colours on her simple
 face ;
 And Lancelot look'd and was perplexed
 in mind,
 And being weak in body said no
 more ;
 But did not love the colour ; wo-
 man's love,
 Save one, he not regarded, and so
 turn'd
 Sighing, and feign'd a sleep until he
 slept.

Then rose Elaine and glided thro'
 the fields,
 And past beneath the wildly-sculp-
 tured gates
 Far up the dim rich city to her kin ;
 There bode the night : but woke
 with dawn, and past
 Down thro' the dim rich city to the
 fields,
 Thence to the cave : so day by day she
 past

In either twilight ghost-like to and
 fro
 Gliding, and every day she tended him,
 And likewise many a night : and
 Lancelot
 Would, tho' he call'd his wound a
 little hurt
 Whereof he should be quickly
 whole, at times
 Brain-feverous in his heat and agony,
 seem
 Uncourteous, even he : but the meek
 maid
 Sweetly forbore him ever, being to him
 Meeker than any child to a rough
 nurse,
 Milder than any mother to a sick
 child,
 And never woman yet, since man's first
 fall,
 Did kindlier unto man, but her deep
 love
 Upbore her ; till the hermit, skill'd
 in all
 The simples and the science of that
 time,
 Told him that her fine care had saved
 his life.
 And the sick man forgot her simple
 blush,
 Would call her friend and sister, sweet
 Elaine,
 Would listen for her coming and re-
 gret
 Her parting step, and held her ten-
 derly,
 And loved her with all love except the
 love
 Of man and woman when they love
 their best
 Closest and sweetest, and had died the
 death
 In any knightly fashion for her sake.
 And peradventure had he seen her
 first
 She might have made this and that
 other world
 Another world for the sick man ; but
 now
 The shackles of an old love straiten'd
 him,
 His honour rooted in dishonour stood,
 And faith unfaithful kept him falsely
 true.

Yet the great knight in his mid-
 sickness made
 Full many a holy vow and pure re-
 solve.
 These, as but born of sickness, could
 not live :
 For when the blood ran lustier in him
 again,
 Full often the sweet image of one face,
 Making a treacherous quiet in his
 heart,
 Dispersed his resolution like a cloud.
 Then if the maiden, while that ghostly
 grace
 Beam'd on his fancy, spoke, he
 answer'd not,
 Or short and coldly, and she knew
 right well
 What the rough sickness meant, but
 what this meant
 She knew not, and the sorrow dimm'd
 her sight,
 And drave her ere her time across the
 fields
 Far into the rich city, where alone
 She murmur'd "vain, in vain : it
 cannot be.
 He will not love me : how then ? must
 I die ?"
 Then as a little helpless innocent bird,
 That has but one plain passage of few
 notes,
 Will sing the simple passage o'er and
 o'er
 For all an April morning, till the ear
 Wearies to hear it, so the simple maid
 Went half the night repeating, " must
 I die ? "
 And now to right she turn'd, and now
 to left,
 And found no ease in turning or in
 rest ;
 And " him or death " she mutter'd,
 " death or him,"
 Again and like a burthen, " him or
 death."

But when Sir Lancelot's deadly
 hurt was whole,
 To Astolat returning rode the three.
 There morn by morn, arraying her
 sweet self
 In that wherein she deem'd she look'd
 her best,

She came before Sir Lancelot, for she
 thought
 " If I be loved, these are my festal
 robes,
 If not, the victim's flowers before he
 fall."
 And Lancelot ever prest upon the maid
 That she should ask some goodly gift
 of him
 For her own self or hers ; " and do
 not shun
 To speak the wish most near to your
 true heart ;
 Such service have you done me, that
 I make
 My will of yours, and Prince and Lord
 am I
 In mine own land, and what I will I
 can."
 Then like a ghost she lifted up her face,
 But like a ghost without the power to
 speak.
 And Lancelot saw that she withheld
 her wish,
 And bode among them yet a little
 space
 Till he should learn it ; and one morn
 it chanced
 He found her in among the garden
 yews,
 And said, " Delay no longer, speak
 your wish,
 Seeing I must go to-day : " then out
 she brake ;
 ' Going ? and we shall never see you
 more.
 And I must die for want of one bold
 word."
 ' Speak : that I live to hear," he said,
 " is yours."
 Then suddenly and passionately she
 spoke :
 ' I have gone mad. I love you : let
 me die."
 ' Ah sister," answer'd Lancelot,
 " what is this ? "
 And innocently extending her white
 arms,
 Your love," she said, " your love
 —to be your wife."
 And Lancelot answer'd, " Had I chos'n
 to wed,
 I had been wedded earlier, sweet
 Elaine :

But now there never will be wife of mine."
 "No, no," she cried, "I care not to be wife,
 But to be with you still, to see your face,
 To serve you, and to follow you thro' the world."
 And Lancelot answer'd, "Nay, the world, the world,
 All ear and eye, with such a stupid heart
 To interpret ear and eye, and such a tongue
 To blare its own interpretation—nay,
 Full ill then should I quit your brother's love,
 And your good father's kindness."
 And she said
 "Not to be with you, not to see your face—
 Alas for me then, my good days are done."
 "Nay, noble maid," he answer'd,
 "ten times nay!
 This is not love: but love's first flash
 in youth,
 Most common: yea I know it of mine own self:
 And you yourself will smile at your own self
 Hereafter, when you yield your flower of life
 To one more fitly yours, not thrice your age:
 And then will I, for true you are and sweet
 Beyond mine old belief in womanhood,
 More specially should your good knight be poor,
 Endow you with broad land and territory
 Even to the half my realm beyond the seas,
 So that would make you happy: furthermore,
 Ev'n to the death, as tho' you were my blood,
 In all your quarrels will I be your knight.
 This will I do, dear damsel, for your sake,
 And more than this I cannot."

While he spoke
 She neither blush'd nor shook, but deathly-pale
 Stood grasping what was nearest, then replied;
 "Of all this will I nothing;" and so 'fell,
 And thus they bore her swooning to her tower.

Then spake, to whom thro' those black walls of yew
 Their talk had pierced, her father,
 "Ay, a flash,
 I fear me, that will strike my blossom dead.
 Too courteous are you, fair Lord Lancelot.
 I pray you, use some rough discourtesy
 To blunt or break her passion."

Lancelot said,
 'That were against me: what I can I will;'
 And there that day remain'd, and toward even
 Sent for his shield: full meekly rose the maid,
 Stript off the case, and gave the naked shield;
 Then, when she heard his horse upon the stones,
 Unclasping flung the casement back, and look'd
 Down on his helm, from which her sleeve had gone.
 And Lancelot knew the little clinking sound;
 And she by tact of love was well aware
 That Lancelot knew that she was looking at him.
 And yet he glanced not up, nor waved his hand,
 Nor bade farewell, but sadly rode away.
 This was the one discourtesy that he used.

So in her tower alone the maiden sat:
 His very shield was gone; only the case,

Her own poor work, her empty
labour, left.

But still she heard him, still his pic-
ture form'd

And grew between her and the pictured
wall.

Then came her father, saying in low
tones

"Have comfort," whom she greeted
quietly.

Then came her brethren saying,
"Peace to thee

Sweet sister," whom she answer'd
with all calm.

But when they left her to herself again,
Death, like a friend's voice from a
distant field

Approaching thro' the darkness,
call'd; the owls

Wailing had power upon her, and she
mixt

Her fancies with the fallow-rifted
glooms

Of evening, and the moanings of the
wind.

And in those days she made a little
song,

And call'd her song "The Song of
Love and Death,"

And sang it : sweetly could she make
and sing.

"Sweet is true love tho' given in
vain, in vain ;

And sweet is death who puts an end
to pain :

I know not which is sweeter, no, not
I.

"Love, art thou sweet ? then bitter
death must be :

Love, thou art bitter ; sweet is death
to me.

O Love, if death be sweeter, let me die.

"Sweet love, that seems not made
to fade away,

Sweet death, that seems to make us
loveless clay,

I know not which is sweeter, no, not
I.

"I fain would follow love, if that
could be ;

I needs must follow death, who calls
for me ;

Call and I follow, I follow ! let me
die."

High with the last line scaled her
voice, and this,

All in a fiery dawning wild with wind
That shook her tower, the brothers
heard, and thought

With shuddering "Hark the Phan-
tom of the house

That ever shrieks before a death,"
and call'd

The father, and all three in hurry and
fear

Ran to her, and lo ! the bloodred
light of dawn

Flared on her face, she shrilling "Let
me die !"

As when we dwell upon a word we
know

Repeating, till the word we know so
well

Becomes a wonder and we know not
why,

So dwelt the father on her face and
thought

"Is this Elaine ?" till back the
maiden fell,

Then gave a languid hand to each,
and lay,

Speaking a still good-morrow with her
eyes.

At last she said "Sweet brothers,
yesternight

I seem'd a curious little maid again,
As happy as when we dwelt among
the woods,

And when you used to take me with
the flood

Up the great river in the boatman's
boat.

Only you would not pass beyond the
cape

That has the poplar on it : there you
fixt

Your limit, oft returning with the tide.
And yet I cried because you would
not pass

Beyond it, and far up the shining
flood

Until we found the palace of the king.
And yet you would not; but this
night I dream'd

That I was all alone upon the flood,
And then I said ' Now shall I have
my will : '

And there I woke, but still the wish
remain'd.

So let me hence that I may pass at
last

Beyond the poplar and far up the
flood,

Until I find the palace of the king.
There will I enter in among them all,
And no man there will dare to mock
at me ;

But there the fine Gawain will won-
der at me,

And there the great Sir Lancelot muse
at me ;

Gawain, who bade a thousand fare-
wells to me,

Lancelot, who coldly went nor bade me
one :

And there the King will know me and
my love,

And there the Queen herself will pity
me,

And all the gentle court will welcome
me,

And after my long voyage I shall
rest ! "

" Peace," said her father, " O my
child, you seem

Light-headed, for what force is yours
to go

So far, being sick ? and wherefore
would you look

On this proud fellow again, who scorns
us all ? "

Then the rough Torre began to
heave and move,

And bluster into stormy sobs and say
" I never loved him : an I meet with
him,

I care not howsoever great he be,
Then will I strike at him and strike
him down,

Give me good fortune, I will strike
him dead,

For this discomfort he hath done the
house."

To which the gentle sister made
reply,

" Fret not yourself, dear brother, nor
be wroth,

Seeing it is no more Sir Lancelot's
fault

Not to love me, than it is mine to love
Him of all men who seems to me the
highest."

" Highest ? " the Father answer'd,
echoing " highest ? "

(He meant to break the passion in
her) " nay,

Daughter, I know not what you call
the highest ;

But this I know, for all the people
know it,

He loves the Queen, and in an open
shame :

And she returns his love in open
shame.

If this be high, what is it to be low ? "

Then spake the lily maid of Asto-
lat ;

" Sweet father, all too faint and sick
am I

For anger : these are slanders : never
yet

Was noble man but made ignoble
talk.

He makes no friend who never made
a foe.

But now it is my glory to have loved
One peerless, without stain : so let me

pass,
My father, howsoever I seem to you,

Not all unhappy, having loved God's
best

And greatest, tho' my love had no
return :

Yet, seeing you desire your child to
live,

Thanks, but you work against your
own desire ;

For if I could believe the things you
say

I should but die the sooner ; where-
fore cease,

Sweet father, and bid call the ghostly man
Hither, and let me shrive me clean, and die."

Go with me, he can steer and row,
and he
Will guide me to that palace, to the doors."

So when the ghostly man had come and gone,
She with a face, bright as for sin forgiven,
Besought Lavaine to write as she devised
A letter, word for word ; and when he ask'd
" Is it for Lancelot, is it for my dear lord ?
Then will I bear it gladly ; " she replied,
" For Lancelot and the Queen and all the world,
But I myself must bear it." Then he wrote
The letter she devised ; which being writ
And folded, " O sweet father, tender and true,
Deny me not," she said—" you never yet
Denied my fancies—this, however strange,
My latest : lay the letter in my hand
A little ere I die, and close the hand
Upon it ; I shall guard it even in death.
And when the heat is gone from out my heart,
Then take the little bed on which I died
For Lancelot's love, and deck it like the Queen's
For richness, and me also like the Queen
In all I have of rich, and lay me on it.
And let there be prepared a chariot-bier
To take me to the river, and a barge
Be ready on the river, clothed in black.
I go in state to court, to meet the Queen.
There surely I shall speak for mine own self,
And none of you can speak for me so well.
And therefore let our dumb old man alone

She ceased : her father promised ; whereupon
She grew so cheerful that they deem'd her death
Was rather in the fantasy than the blood.
But ten slow mornings past, and on the eleventh
Her father laid the letter in her hand,
And closed the hand upon it, and she died.
So that day there was dole in Astolat.

But when the next sun brake from underground,
Then, those two brethren slowly with bent brows
Accompanying, the sad chariot-bier
Past like a shadow thro' the field, that shone
Full-summer, to that stream whereon the barge,
Pall'd all its length in blackest samite, lay.
There sat the lifelong creature of the house,
Loyal, the dumb old servitor, on deck,
Winking his eyes, and twisted all his face.
So those two brethren from the chariot took
And on the black decks laid her in her bed,
Set in her hand a lily, o'er her hung
The silken case with braided blazonings,
And kiss'd her quiet brows, and saying to her
" Sister, farewell for ever," and again
" Farewell, sweet sister," parted all in tears.
Then rose the dumb old servitor, and the dead
Steer'd by the dumb went upward with the flood—
In her right hand the lily, in her left
The letter—all her bright hair streaming down—
And all the coverlid was cloth of gold

Drawn to her waist, and she herself
in white
All but her face, and that clear-fea-
tured face
Was lovely, for she did not seem as
dead
But fast asleep, and lay as tho' she
smiled.

That day Sir Lancelot at the palace
craved
Audience of Guinevere, to give at last
The price of half a realm, his costly
gift,
Hard-won and hardly won with
bruise and blow,
With deaths of others, and almost his
own,
The nine-years-fought-for diamonds :
for he saw
One of her house, and sent him to the
Queen
Bearing his wish, whereto the Queen
agreed
With such and so unmoved a majesty
She might have seem'd her statue,
but that he,
Low-drooping till he wellnigh kiss'd
her feet
For loyal awe, saw with a sidelong
eye
The shadow of a piece of pointed lace,
In the Queen's shadow, vibrate on the
walls,
And parted, laughing in his courtly
heart.

All in an oriel on the summer side,
Vine-clad, of Arthur's palace toward
the stream,
They met, and Lancelot kneeling
utter'd, " Queen,
Lady, my liege, in whom I have my
joy,
Take, what I had not won except for
you,
These jewels, and make me happy,
making them
An armlet for the roundest arm on
earth,
Or necklace for a neck to which the
swan's
Is tawnier than her cygnet's : these
are words :

Your beauty is your beauty, and I sin
In speaking, yet O grant my worship
of it
Words, as we grant grief tears. Such
sin in words
Perchance, we both can pardon : but
my Queen,
I hear of rumours flying thro' your
court.
Our bond, as not the bond of man and
wife,
Should have in it an absoluter trust
To make up that defect : let rumours
be :
When did not rumours fly ? these, as
I trust
That you trust me in your own noble-
ness,
I may not well believe that you be-
lieve."

While thus he spoke, half-turn'd
away, the Queen
Brake from the vast oriel-embowering
vine
Leaf after leaf, and tore, and cast
them off,
Till all the place whereon she stood
was green ;
Then, when he ceased, in one cold
passive hand
Received at once and laid aside the
gems
There on a table near her, and re-
plied.

" It may be, I am quicker of belief
Than you believe me, Lancelot of the
Lake.
Our bond is not the bond of man and
wife.
This good is in it, whatsoe'er of ill,
It can be broken easier. I for you
This many a year have done despite
and wrong
To one whom ever in my heart of
hearts
I did acknowledge nobler. What are
these ?
Diamonds for me ! they had been
thrice their worth
Being your gift, had you not lost your

To loyal hearts the value of all gifts
 Must vary as the giver's. Not for
 me !
 For her ! for your new fancy. Only
 this
 Grant me, I pray you : have your
 joys apart.
 I doubt not that however changed,
 you keep
 So much of what is graceful : and
 myself
 Would shun to break those bounds of
 courtesy
 In which as Arthur's queen I move
 and rule :
 So cannot speak my mind. An end
 to this !
 A strange one ! yet I take it with
 Amen.
 Sopray you, add my diamonds to her
 pearls ;
 Deck her with these ; tell her, she
 shines me down :
 An armlet for an arm to which the
 Queen's
 Is haggard, or a necklace for a neck
 O as much fairer—as a faith once fair
 Was richer than these diamonds—
 hers not mine—
 Nay, by the mother of our Lord him-
 self ;
 Or hers or mine, mine now to work
 my will—
 She shall not have them."
 Saying which she seized,
 And, thro' the casement standing
 wide for heat,
 Flung them, and down they flash'd,
 and smote the stream.
 Then from the smitten surface flash'd,
 as it were,
 Diamonds to meet them, and they
 past away.
 Then while Sir Lancelot leant, in half
 disgust
 At love, life, all things on the win-
 dow ledge,
 Close underneath his eyes, and right
 across
 Where these had fallen, slowly past
 the barge
 Whereon the lily maid of Astolat
 Lay smiling, like a star in blackest
 night.

But the wild Queen, who saw not,
 burst away
 To weep and wail in secret ; and the
 barge,
 On to the palace-doorway sliding,
 paused.
 There two stood arm'd, and kept the
 door ; to whom,
 All up the marble stair, tier over tier,
 Were added mouths that gaped, and
 eyes that ask'd
 " What is it ? " but that oarsman's
 haggard face,
 As hard and still as is the face that
 men
 Shape to their fancy's eye from broken
 rocks
 On some cliff-side, appall'd them,
 and they said,
 " He is enchanted, cannot speak—
 and she,
 Look how she sleeps—the Fairy
 Queen, so fair !
 Yea, but how pale ! what are they ?
 flesh and blood ?
 Or come to take the King to fairy
 land ?
 For some do hold our Arthur cannot
 die,
 But that he passes into fairy land."

While thus they babbled of the King,
 the King
 Came girt with knights : then turn'd
 the tongueless man
 From the half-face to the full eye, and
 rose
 And pointed to the damsel, and the
 doors.
 So Arthur bade the meek Sir Percivale
 And pure Sir Galahad to uplift the
 maid ;
 And reverently they bore her into
 hall.
 Then came the fine Gawain and
 wonder'd at her,
 And Lancelot later came and mused
 at her,
 And last the Queen herself and pitied
 her,
 But Arthur spied the letter in her
 hand,
 Stoopt, took, brake seal, and read it ;
 this was all

"Most noble lord, Sir Lancelot of the Lake,
 I, sometime call'd the maid of Astolat,
 Come, for you left me taking no farewell,
 Hither, to take my last farewell of you.
 I loved you, and my love had no return,
 And therefore my true love has been my death.
 And therefore to our lady Guinevere,
 And to all other ladies, I make moan.
 Pray for my soul, and yield me burial.
 Pray for my soul thou too, Sir Lancelot,
 As thou art a knight peerless."
 Thus he read,
 And ever in the reading, lords and dames
 Wept, looking often from his face who read
 To hers which lay so silent, and at times,
 So touch'd were they, half-thinking that her lips,
 Who had devised the letter, moved again.

Then freely spoke Sir Lancelot to them all;
 "My lord liege Arthur, and all ye that hear,
 Know that for this most gentle maiden's death
 Right heavy am I; for good she was and true,
 But loved me with a love beyond all love
 In women, whomsoever I have known,
 Yet to be loved makes not to love again;
 Not at my years, however it hold in youth.
 I swear by truth and knighthood that I gave
 No cause, not willingly, for such a love:
 To this I call my friends in testimony,
 Her brethren, and her father, who himself

Besought me to be plain and blunt, and use,
 To break her passion, some discourtesy
 Against my nature: what I could, I did.
 I left her and I bade her no farewell.
 Tho', had I dreamt the damsel would have died,
 I might have put my wits to some rough use,
 And help'd her from herself."
 Then said the Queen
 (Sea was her wrath, yet working after storm)
 "You might at least have done her so much grace,
 Fair lord, as would have help'd her from her death."
 He raised his head, their eyes met and hers fell,
 He adding,
 "Queen, she would not be content
 Save that I wedded her, which could not be.
 Then might she follow me thro' the world, she ask'd;
 It could not be. I told her that her love
 Was but the flash of youth, would darken down
 To rise hereafter in a stiller flame
 Toward one more worthy of her—then would I,
 More specially were he, she wedded, poor,
 Estate them with large land and territory
 In mine own realm beyond the narrow seas,
 To keep them in all joyance: more than this
 I could not; this she would not, and she died."

He pausing, Arthur answer'd, "O my knight,
 It will be to your worship, as my knight,
 And mine, as head of all our Table Round,
 To see that she be buried worshipfully."

So toward that shrine which then Most love and most affianced, for I
 in all the realm know
 Was richest, Arthur leading, slowly What thou hast been in battle by my
 went side,
 The marshall'd order of their Table And many a time have watch'd thee
 Round, at the tilt
 And Lancelot sad beyond his wont, Strike down the lusty and long-
 to see practised knight,
 The maiden buried, not as one un- And let the younger and unskill'd go
 known, by
 Nor meanly, but with gorgeous To win his honour and to make his
 obsequies, name,
 And mass, and rolling music, like a And loved thy courtesies and thee, a
 Queen, man
 And when the knights had laid her Made to be loved; but now I would
 comely head to God,
 Low in the dust of half-forgotten kings, For the wild people say wild things of
 Then Arthur spake among them, thee,
 "Let her tomb Thou couldst have loved this maiden,
 Be costly, and her image thereupon, shaped, it seems,
 And let the shield of Lancelot at her By God for thee alone, and from her
 feet face,
 Be carven, and her lily in her hand. If one may judge the living by the
 And let the story of her dolorous dead,
 voyage Delicately pure and marvellously fair,
 For all true hearts be blazon'd on her Who might have brought thee, now a
 tomb lonely man
 In letters gold and azure!" which Wifeless and heirless, noble issue,
 was wrought sons
 Thereafter; but when now the lords Born to the glory of thy name and
 and dames fame,
 And people, from the high door My knight, the great Sir Lancelot of
 streaming, brake the Lake."
 Disorderly, as homeward each, the
 Queen,
 Who mark'd Sir Lancelot where he Then answer'd Lancelot, "Fair she
 moved apart, was, my King,
 Drew near, and sigh'd in passing Pure, as you ever wish your knights
 "Lancelot, to be.
 Forgive me; mine was jealousy in To doubt her fairness were to want an
 love, eye,
 He answer'd with his eyes upon the To doubt her pureness were to want a
 ground, heart—
 "That is love's curse; pass on, my Yea, to be loved, if what is worthy
 Queen, forgiven." love
 But Arthur who beheld his cloudy Could bind him, but free love will not
 brows be bound."
 Approach'd him, and with full affec- "Free love, so bound, were freest,"
 tion flung said the King.
 One arm about his neck, and spake "Let love be free; free love is for
 and said, the best:
 "Lancelot, my Lancelot, thou in And, after heaven, on our dull side of
 whom I have death,

What should be best, if not so pure a love
 Clothed in so pure a loveliness ? yet thee
 She fail'd to bind, tho' being, as I think,
 Unbound as yet, and gentle, as I know."

And Lancelot answer'd nothing,
 but he went,
 And at the inrunning of a little brook
 Sat by the river in a cove, and watch'd
 The high reed wave, and lifted up his eyes
 And saw the barge that brought her
 moving down,
 Far-off, a blot upon the stream, and
 said
 Low in himself " Ah simple heart
 and sweet,
 You loved me, damsel, surely with a
 love
 Far tenderer than my Queen's. Pray
 for thy soul ?
 Ay, that will I. Farewell too—now
 at last—
 Farewell, fair lily. ' Jealousy in
 love ? '
 Not rather dead love's harsh heir,
 jealous pride ?
 Queen, if I grant the jealousy as of
 love,
 May not your crescent fear for name
 and fame
 Speak, as it waxes, of a love that
 wanes ?
 Why did the King dwell on my name
 to me ?

Mine own name shames me, seeming
 a reproach,
 Lancelot, whom the Lady of the Lake
 Stole from his mother—as the story
 runs—
 She chanted snatches of mysterious
 song
 Heard on the winding waters, eve and
 morn
 She kiss'd me saying thou art fair, my
 child,
 As a king's son, and often in her arms
 She bare me, pacing on the dusky
 mere.

Would she had drown'd me in it,
 where'er it be !
 For what am I ? what profits me my
 name
 Of greatest knight ? I fought for it,
 and have it :
 Pleasure to have it, none ; to lose it,
 pain ;
 Now grown a part of me : but what
 use in it ?
 To make men worse by making my
 sin known ?
 Or sin seem less, the sinner seeming
 great ?
 Alas for Arthur's greatest knight, a
 man
 Not after Arthur's heart ! I needs
 must break
 These bonds that so defame me : not
 without
 She wills it : would I, if she will'd it ?
 nay,
 Who knows ? but if I would not, then
 may God,
 I pray him, send a sudden Angel
 down
 To seize me by the hair and bear me
 far,
 And fling me deep in that forgotten
 mere,
 Among the tumbled fragments of the
 hills."

So groan'd Sir Lancelot in remorse-
 ful pain,
 Not knowing he should die a holy man.

GUINEVERE

QUEEN GUINEVERE had fled the court,
 and sat
 There in the holy house at Almesbury
 Weeping, none with her save a little
 maid,
 A novice : one low light betwixt
 them burn'd
 Blurr'd by the creeping mist, for all
 abroad,
 Beneath a moon unseen albeit at full,
 The white mist, like a face-cloth to
 the face,
 Clung to the dead earth. and the land
 was still.

For hither had she fled, her cause
 of flight
 Sir Modred ; he the nearest to the
 King,
 His nephew, ever like a subtle beast
 Lay couchant with his eyes upon the
 throne,
 Ready to spring, waiting a chance :
 for this,
 He chill'd the popular praises of the
 King
 With silent smiles of slow disparage-
 ment ;
 And tamper'd with the Lords of the
 White Horse,
 Heathen, the brood by Hengist left ;
 and sought
 To make disruption in the Table
 Round
 Of Arthur, and to splinter it into
 feuds
 Serving his traitorous end ; and all
 his aims
 Were sharpen'd by strong hate for
 Lancelot.

For thus it chanced one morn when
 all the court,
 Green-suited, but with plumes that
 mock'd the may,
 Had been, their wont, a-maying and
 return'd,
 That Modred still in green, all ear and
 eye,
 Climb'd to the high top of the garden-
 wall
 To spy some secret scandal if he might,
 And saw the Queen who sat betwixt
 her best
 Enid, and lissome Vivien, of her
 court
 The wildest and the worst ; and more
 than this
 He saw not, for Sir Lancelot passing
 by
 Spied where he couch'd, and as the
 gardener's hand
 Picks from the colewort a green
 caterpillar,
 So from the high wall and the flower-
 ing grove
 Of grasses Lancelot pluck'd him by
 the heel,

And cast him as a worm upon the way ;
 But when he knew the Prince tho'
 marr'd with dust,
 He, reverencing king's blood in a bad
 man,
 Made such excuses as he might, and
 these
 Full knightly without scorn ; for in
 those days
 No knight of Arthur's noblest dealt
 in scorn ;
 But, if a man were halt or hunch'd,
 in him
 By those whom God had made full-
 limb'd and tall,
 Scorn was allow'd as part of his de-
 fect,
 And he was answer'd softly by the
 King
 And all his Table. So Sir Lancelot
 help
 To raise the Prince, who rising twice
 or thrice
 Full sharply smote his knees, and
 smiled, and went :
 But, ever after, the small violence
 done
 Rankled in him and ruffled 'all his
 heart,
 As the sharp wind that ruffles all day
 long
 A little bitter pool about a stone
 On the bare coast.

But when Sir Lancelot told
 This matter to the Queen, at first she
 laugh'd
 Lightly, to think of Modred's dusty
 fall,
 Then shudder'd, as the village wife
 who cries
 " I shudder, some one steps across my
 grave ; "
 Then laugh'd again, but faintlier, for
 indeed
 She half-foresaw that he, the subtle
 beast,
 Would track her guilt until he found,
 and hers
 Would be for evermore a name of
 Henceforward rarely could she front
 in Hall,
 Or elsewhere, Modred's narrow foxy
 face,

Heart-hiding smile, and gray persistent eye :
Henceforward too, the Powers that tend the soul,
To help it from the death that cannot die,
And save it even in extremes, began
To vex and plague her. Many a time for hours,
Besides the placid breathings of the King,
In the dead night, grim faces came and went
Before her, or a vague spiritual fear—
Like to some doubtful noise of creaking doors,
Heard by the watcher in a haunted house,
That keeps the rust of murder on the walls—
Held her awake : or if she slept, she dream'd
An awful dream ; for then she seem'd to stand
On some vast plain before a setting sun,
And from the sun there swiftly made at her
A ghastly something, and its shadow flew
Before it, till it touch'd her, and she turn'd—
When lo ! her own, that broadening from her feet,
And blackening, swallow'd all the land, and in it
Far cities burnt, and with a cry she woke.
And all this trouble did not pass but grew ;
Till ev'n the clear face of the guileless King,
And trustful courtesies of household life,
Became her bane ; and at the last she said,
" O Lancelot, get thee hence to thine own land,
For if thou tarry we shall meet again,
And if we meet again, some evil chance
Will make the smouldering scandal break and blaze
Before the people, and our lord the King."
And Lancelot ever promised, but remain'd,
And still they met and met. Again she said,
" O Lancelot, if thou love me get thee hence."
And then they were agreed upon a night
(When the good King should not be there) to meet
And part for ever. Passion-pale they met
And greeted : hands in hands, and eye to eye,
Low on the border of her couch they sat
Stammering and staring : it was their last hour,
A madness of farewells. And Modified brought
His creatures to the basement of the tower
For testimony ; and crying with full voice
" Traitor, come out, ye are trapt at last," aroused
Lancelot, who rushing outward lion-like
Leapt on him, and hurl'd him headlong, and he fell
Stunn'd, and his creatures took and bare him off
And all was still : then she, " the end is come
And I am shamed for ever ; " and he said
" Mine be the shame ; mine was the sin : but rise,
And fly to my strong castle overseas :
There will I hide thee, till my life shall end,
There hold thee with my life against the world."
She answer'd " Lancelot, wilt thou hold me so ?
Nay friend, for we have taken our farewells.
Would God, that thou could'st hide me from myself !

Mine is the shame, for I was wife, and
 thou
 Unwedded : yet rise now, and let us
 fly,
 For I will draw me into sanctuary,
 And bide my doom." So Lancelot
 got her horse,
 Set her thereon, and mounted on his
 own,
 And then they rode to the divided
 way,
 There kiss'd, and parted weeping for
 he past,
 Love-loyal to the least wish of the
 Queen,
 Back to his land ; but she to Almes-
 bury
 Fled all night long by glimmering
 waste and weald,
 And heard the Spirits of the waste
 and weald
 Moan as she fled, or thought she heard
 them moan :
 And in herself she moan'd " too late,
 too late !"
 Till in the cold wind that foreruns the
 morn,
 A blot in heaven, the Raven, flying
 high,
 Croak'd, and she thought " he spies a
 field of death ;
 For now the Heathen of the Northern
 Sea,
 Lured by the crimes and frailties of
 the court,
 Begin to slay the folk, and spoil the
 land."

And when she came to Almesbury
 she spake
 There to the nuns, and said, " mine
 enemies
 Pursue me, but, O peaceful Sister-
 hood,
 Receive, and yield me sanctuary, nor
 ask
 Her name, to whom ye yield it, till her
 time
 To tell you : " and her beauty, grace
 and power,
 Wrought as a charm upon them, and
 they spared
 To ask it,

So the stately Queen abode
 For many a week, unknowna, among
 the nuns ;
 Nor with them mix'd, nor told her
 name, nor sought,
 Wrapt in her grief, for housel or for
 shrift,
 But communed only with the little
 maid,
 Who pleased her with a babbling
 heedlessness
 Which often lured her from herself ;
 but now,
 This night, a rumour wildly blown
 about
 Came, that Sir Modred had usurped
 the realm,
 And leagued him with the heathen,
 while the King
 Was waging war on Lancelot : then
 she thought,
 " With what a hate the people and
 the King
 Must hate me," and bow'd down upon
 her hands
 Silent, until the little maid, who
 brook'd
 No silence, brake it, uttering " late !
 so late !
 What hour, I wonder, now ? " and
 when she drew
 No answer, by and by began to hum
 An air the nuns had taught her ;
 " late, so late ! "
 Which when she heard, the Queen
 look'd up, and said,
 " O maiden, if indeed you list to sing,
 Sing, and unbind my heart that I may
 weep."
 Whereat full willingly sang the little
 maid.
 " ' Late, late, so late ! and dark the
 night and chill !
 Late, late, so late ! but we can enter
 still.
 Too late, too late ! ye cannot enter
 now.
 " ' No light had we : for that we do
 repent ;
 And learning this, the bridegroom will
 relent.
 Too late, too late ! ye cannot enter
 now.

" 'No light: so late! and dark and
chill the night!
O let us in, that we may find the
light!
Too late, too late: ye cannot enter
now."

" 'Have we not heard the bride-
groom is so sweet?
O let us in, tho' late, to kiss his feet!
No, no, too late! ye cannot enter
now'."

So sang the novice, while full pas-
sionately,
Her head upon her hands, remember-
ing
Her thought when first she came,
wept the sad Queen.
Then said the little novice prattling
to her.

" O pray you, noble lady, weep no
more;
But let my words, the words of one
so small,
Who knowing nothing knows but to
obey,
And if I do not there is penance
given—
Comfort your sorrows; for they do
not flow
From evil done; right sure am I of
that,
Who see your tender grace and state-
liness.
But weigh your sorrows with our lord
the King's,
And weighing find them less; for gone
is he
To wage grim war against Sir Lance-
lot there,
Round that strong castle where he
holds the Queen;
And Modred whom he left in charge
of all,
The traitor—Ah sweet lady, the
King's grief
For his own self, and his own Queen,
and realm,
Must needs be thrice as great as any
of ours.
For me, I thank the saints, I am not
great.

For if there ever come a grief to me
I cry my cry in silence, and have
done:

None knows it, and my tears have
brought me good:

But even were the griefs of little ones
As great as those of great ones, yet
this grief

Is added to the griefs the great must
bear,

That howsoever much they may
desire

Silence, they cannot weep behind a
cloud:

As even here they talk at Almesbury
About the good King and his wicked
Queen,

And were I such a King with such a
Queen,

Well might I wish to veil her wicked-
ness,

But were I such a King, it could not
be."

Then to her own sad heart mutter'd
the Queen.

" Will the child kill me with her inno-
cent talk? "

But openly she answer'd " must not
I,

If this false traitor have displaced his
lord,

Grieve with the common grief of all
the realm? "

" Yea," said the maid, " this is all
woman's grief,

That *she* is woman, whose disloyal
life

Hath wrought confusion in the Table
Round

Which good King Arthur founded,
years ago,

With signs and miracles and wonders,
there

At Camelot, ere the coming of the
Queen."

Then thought the Queen within
herself again;

" Will the child kill me with her foolish
prate? "

But openly she spake and said to
her;

" O little maid, shut in by nunnery walls,
 What canst thou know of Kings and Tables Round,
 Or what of signs and wonders, but the signs
 And simple miracles of thy nunnery? "

To whom the little novice garrulously,
 " Yea, but I know : the land was full of signs
 And wonders ere the coming of the Queen.
 So said my father, and himself was knight
 Of the great Table—at the founding of it ;
 And rode thereto from Lyonesse, and he said
 That as he rode, an hour or maybe twain
 After the sunset, down the coast, he heard
 Strange music, and he paused and turning—there,
 All down the lonely coast of Lyonesse,
 Each with a beacon-star upon his head,
 And with a wild sea-light about his feet,
 He saw them—headland after headland flame
 Far on into the rich heart of the west :
 And in the light the white mermaiden swam,
 And strong man-breasted things stood from the sea,
 And sent a deep sea-voice thro' all the land,
 To which the little elves of chasm and cleft
 Made answer, sounding like a distant horn.
 So said my father—yea, and furthermore,
 Next morning, while he past the dimlit woods,
 Himself beheld three spirits mad with joy
 Come dashing down on a tall wayside flower,

That shook beneath them, as the thistle shakes
 When three gray linnets wrangle for the seed :
 And still at evenings on before his horse
 The flickering fairy-circle wheel'd and broke
 Flying, and link'd again, and wheel'd and broke
 Flying, for all the land was full of life.
 And when at last he came to Camelot,
 A wreath of airy dancers hand-in-hand
 Swung round the lighted lantern of the hall ;
 And in the hall itself was such a feast
 As never man had dream'd ; for every knight
 Had whatsoever meat he long'd for served
 By hands unseen ; and even as he said
 Down in the cellars merry bloated things
 Shoulder'd the spigot, straddling on the butts
 While the wine ran : so glad were spirits and men
 Before the coming of the sinful Queen."

Then spake the Queen and somewhat bitterly.
 " Were they so glad ? ill prophets were they all,
 Spirits and men : could none of them foresee,
 Not even thy wise father with his signs
 And wonders, what has fall'n upon the realm ? "

To whom the novice garrulously again.
 " Yea, one, a bard ; of whom my father said,
 Full many a noble war-song had he sung,
 Ev'n in the presence of an enemy's fleet,
 Between the steep cliff and the coming wave ;
 And many a mystic lay of life and death

Had chanted on the smoky mountain-tops,
 When round him bent the spirits of the hills
 With all their downy hair blown back like flame :
 So said my father—and that night the bard
 Sang Arthur's glorious wars, and sang the King
 As well-nigh more than man, and rail'd at those
 Who call'd him the false son of Gorois :
 For there was no man knew from whence he came ;
 But after tempest, when the long wave broke
 All down the thundering shores of Bude and Bos,
 There came a day as still as heaven, and then
 They found a naked child upon the sands
 Of dark Dundagil by the Cornish sea ;
 And that was Arthur ; and they foster'd him
 Till he by miracle was approv'n king :
 And that his grave should be a mystery
 From all men, like his birth ; and could he find
 A woman in her womanhood as great
 As he was in his manhood, then, he sang,
 The twain together well might change the world.
 But even in the middle of his song
 He falter'd, and his hand fell from the harp,
 And pale he turn'd, and reel'd, and would have fall'n,
 But that they stay'd him up ; nor would he tell
 His vision ; but what doubt that he foresaw
 This evil work of Lancelot and the Queen ? ”

Then thought the Queen “ lo ! they have set her on,
 Our simple-seeming Abbess and her nuns,

To play upon me,” and bow'd her head nor spake.
 Whereat the novice crying, with clasp'd hands,
 Shame on her own garrulity garrulously,
 Said the good nuns would check her gadding tongue
 Full often, “ and, sweet lady, if I seem
 To vex an ear too sad to listen to me,
 Unmannerly, with prattling and the tales
 Which my good father told, check me too :
 Nor let me shame my father's memory, one
 Of noblest manners, tho' himself would say
 Sir Lancelot had the noblest ; and he died,
 Kill'd in a tilt, come next, five summers back,
 And left me ; but of others who remain,
 And of the two first-famed for courtesy—
 And pray you check me if I ask amiss—
 But pray you, which had noblest, while you moved
 Among them, Lancelot or our lord the King ? ”

Then the pale Queen look'd up and answer'd her.
 “ Sir Lancelot, as became a noble knight,
 Was gracious to all ladies, and the same
 In open battle or the tilting-field
 Forbore his own advantage, and the King
 In open battle or the tilting-field
 Forbore his own advantage, and these two
 Were the most nobly-mannered men of all ;
 For manners are not idle, but the fruit
 Of loyal nature, and of noble mind.”

“ Yea,” said the maid, “ be manners such fair fruit ?

Then Lancelot's needs must be a thousand-fold
 Less noble, being, as all rumour runs,
 The most disloyal friend in all the world."

To which a mournful answer made the Queen.
 "O closed about by narrowing nunnery-walls,
 What knowest thou of the world, and all its lights
 And shadows, all the wealth and all the woe?
 If ever Lancelot, that most noble knight,
 Were for one hour less noble than himself,
 Pray for him that he scape the doom of fire,
 And weep for her, who drew him to his doom."

"Yea," said the little novice, "I pray for both;
 But I should all as soon believe that his,
 Sir Lancelot's, were as noble as the King's,
 As I could think, sweet lady, yours would be
 Such as they are, were you the sinful Queen."

So she, like many another babblers, hurt
 Whom she would soothe, and harm'd where she would heal;
 For here a sudden flush of wrathful heat
 Fired all the pale face of the Queen, who cried,
 "Such as thou art be never maiden more
 For ever! thou their tool, set on to plague
 And play upon, and harry me, petty spy
 And traitress." When that storm of anger brake
 From Guinevere, aghast the maiden rose,
 White as her veil, and stood before the Queen

As tremulously as foam upon the beach
 Stands in a wind, ready to break and fly,
 And when the Queen had added "get thee hence"
 Fled frightened. Then that other left alone
 Sigh'd, and began to gather heart again,
 Saying in herself "the simple, fearful child
 Meant nothing, but my own too-fearful guilt
 Simpler than any child, betrays itself.
 But help me, heaven, for surely I repent.
 For what is true repentance but in thought—
 Not ev'n in inmost thought to think again
 The sins that made the past so pleasant to us:
 And I have sworn never to see him more,
 To see him more."

And ev'n in saying this,
 Her memory from old habit of the mind
 Went slipping back upon the golden days
 In which she saw him first, when Lancelot came,
 Reputed the best knight and goodliest man,
 Ambassador, to lead her to his lord Arthur, and led her forth, and far ahead
 Of his and her retinue moving, they, Rapt in sweet talk or lively, all on love
 And sport and tilts and pleasure, (for the time
 Was maytime, and as yet no sin was dream'd.)
 Rode under groves that look'd a paradise
 Of blossom, over sheets of hyacinth
 That seem'd the heavens upbreking thro' the earth,
 And on from hill to hill, and every day
 Beheld at noon in some delicious dale
 The silk pavilions of King Arthur raised

For brief repast or afternoon repose
 By couriers gone before; and on
 again,
 Till yet once more ere set of sun they
 saw
 The Dragon of the great Pendragon-
 ship,
 That crown'd the state pavilion of
 the King,
 Blaze by the rushing brook or silent
 well.

But when the Queen immersed in
 such a trance,
 And moving thro' the past uncon-
 sciously,
 Came to that point, when first she
 saw the King
 Ride toward her from the city, sigh'd
 to find
 Her journey done, glanced at him,
 thought him cold,
 High, self-contain'd, and passionless,
 not like him,
 "Not like my Lancelot"—while she
 brooded thus
 And grew half-guilty in her thoughts
 again,
 There rode an armed warrior to the
 doors.
 A murmuring whisper thro' the
 nunnery ran,
 Then on a sudden a cry, "the King."
 She sat
 Stiff-stricken, listening; but when
 armed feet
 Thro' the long gallery from the outer
 doors
 Rang coming, prone from off her seat
 she fell,
 And grovelling with her face against
 the floor:
 There with her milkwhite arms and
 shadowy hair
 She made her face a darkness from
 the King:
 And in the darkness heard his armed
 feet
 Pause by her; then came silence, then
 a voice,
 Monotonous and hollow like a Ghost's
 Denouncing judgment, but tho'
 changed the King's.

"Lie'st thou here so low, the child
 of one
 I honour'd, happy, dead before thy
 shame?
 Well is it that no child is born of thee.
 The children born of thee are sword
 and fire,
 Red ruin, and the breaking up of
 laws,
 The craft of kindred and the Godless
 hosts
 Of heathen swarming o'er the Nor-
 thern Sea.
 Whom I, while yet Sir Lancelot, my
 right arm,
 The mightiest of my knights, abode
 with me,
 Have everywhere about this land of
 Christ
 In twelve great battles ruining over-
 thrown,
 And knowest thou now from whence
 I come—from him,
 From waging bitter war with him:
 and he,
 That did not shun to smite me in
 worse way,
 Had yet that grace of courtesy in him
 left,
 He spared to lift his hand against the
 King
 Who made him knight: but many a
 knight was slain;
 And many more, and all his kith and
 kin
 Clave to him, and abode in his own
 land.
 And many more when Modred raised
 revolt,
 Forgetful of their troth and fealty,
 clave
 To Modred, and a remnant stays with
 me.
 And of this remnant will I leave a
 part,
 True men who love me still, for whom
 I live,
 To guard thee in the wild hour com-
 ing on,
 Lest but a hair of this low head be
 harm'd.
 Fear not: thou shalt be guarded till
 my death.
 Howbeit I know, if ancient prophecies

Have err'd not, that I march to meet my doom.
 Thou hast not made my life so sweet to me,
 That I the King should greatly care to live;
 For thou hast spoilt the purpose of my life.
 Bear with me for the last time while I show,
 Ev'n for thy sake, the sin which thou hast sinn'd.
 For when the Roman left us, and their law
 Relax'd its hold upon us, and the ways
 Were fill'd with rapine, here and there a deed
 Of prowess done redress'd a random wrong.
 But I was first of all the kings who drew
 The knighthood-errant of this realm and all
 The realms together under me, their Head,
 In that fair order of my Table Round,
 A glorious company, the flower of men,
 To serve as model for the mighty world,
 And be the fair beginning of a time.
 I made them lay their hands in mine and swear
 To reverence the King, as if he were
 Their conscience, and their conscience as their King,
 To break the heathen and uphold the Christ,
 To ride abroad redressing human wrongs,
 To speak no slander, no, nor listen to it,
 To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,
 To love one maiden only, cleave to her,
 And worship her by years of noble deeds,
 Until they won her; for indeed I knew
 Of no more subtle master under heaven
 Than is the maiden passion for a maid,
 Not only to keep down the base in man,
 But teach high thought, and amiable words
 And courtness, and the desire of fame,
 And love of truth, and all that makes a man.
 And all this throve until I wedded thee!
 Believing 'lo mine helpmate, one to feel
 My purpose and rejoicing in my joy."
 Then came thy shameful sin with Lancelot;
 Then came the sin of Tristram and Isolt;
 Then others, following these my mightiest knights,
 And drawing foul ensample from fair names,
 Sinn'd also, till the loathsome opposite
 Of all my heart had destined did obtain,
 And all thro' thee! so that this life of mine
 I guard as God's high gift from scathe and wrong,
 Not greatly care to lose; but rather think
 How sad it were for Arthur, should he live,
 To sit once more within his lonely hall,
 And miss the wonted number of my knights,
 And miss to hear high talk of noble deeds
 As in the golden days before thy sin.
 For which of us, who might be left, could speak
 Of the pure heart, nor seem to glance at thee?
 And in thy bowers of Camelot or of Usk
 Thy shadow still would glide from room to room,
 And I should evermore be vex'd with thee
 In hanging robe or vacant ornament,
 Or ghostly footfall echoing on the stair.
 For think not, tho' thou would'st not love thy lord,
 Thy lord has wholly lost his love for thee.

I am not made of so slight elements.
 Yet must I leave thee, woman, to thy
 shame.
 I hold that man the worst of public
 foes
 Who either for his own or children's
 sake,
 To save his blood from scandal, lets
 the wife
 Whom he knows false, abide and rule
 the house :
 For being thro' his cowardice allow'd
 Her station, taken everywhere for
 pure,
 She like a new disease, unknown to
 men,
 Creeps, no precaution used, among
 the crowd,
 Makes wicked lightnings of her eyes,
 and saps
 The fealty of our friends, and stirs
 the pulse
 With devil's leaps, and poisons half
 the young.
 Worst of the worst were that man he
 that reigns !
 Better the King's waste hearth and
 aching heart
 Than thou reseated in thy place of
 light,
 The mockery of my people, and their
 bane."

He paused, and in the pause she
 crept an inch
 Nearer, and laid her hands about his
 feet.
 Far off a solitary trumpet blew,
 Then waiting by the doors the war-
 horse neigh'd
 As at a friend's voice, and he spake
 again.

"Yet think not that I come to urge
 thy crimes,
 I did not come to curse thee, Guine-
 vere,
 I, whose vast pity almost makes me
 die
 To see thee, laying there thy golden
 head,
 My pride in happier summers, at my
 feet.

The wrath which forced my thoughts
 on that fierce law,
 The doom of treason and the flaming
 death,
 (When first I learnt thee hidden here)
 is past.
 The pang—which while I weigh'd thy
 heart with one
 Too wholly true to dream untruth in
 thee,
 Made my tears burn—is also past, in
 part.
 And all is past, the sin is sinn'd, and
 I,
 Lo ! I forgive thee, as Eternal God
 Forgives : do thou for thine own soul
 the rest.
 But how to take last leave of all I
 loved ?
 O golden hair, with which I used to
 play
 Not knowing ! O imperial-moulded
 form,
 And beauty such as never woman
 wore,
 Until it came a kingdom's curse with
 thee—
 I cannot touch thy lips, they are not
 mine,
 But Lancelot's : nay, they never were
 the King's.
 I cannot take thy hand ; that too is
 flesh,
 And in the flesh thou hast sinn'd ; and
 mine own flesh,
 Here looking down on thine polluted,
 cries
 I loathe thee : ' yet not less, O
 Guinevere,
 For I was ever virgin save for thee,
 My love thro' flesh hath wrought into
 my life
 So far, that my doom is, I love thee
 still.
 Let no man dream but that I love
 thee still.
 Perchance, and so thou purify thy
 soul,
 And so thou lean on our fair father
 Christ,
 Hereafter in that world where all are
 pure
 We two may meet before high God,
 and thou

Wilt spring to me, and claim me thine,
and know
I am thine husband—not a smaller
soul,
Nor Lancelot, nor another. Leave
me that,
I charge thee, my last hope. Now
must I hence.

Thro' the thick night I hear the trum-
pet blow :

They summon me their King to lead
mine hosts

Far down to that great battle in the
west,

Where I must strike against my
sister's son,

Leagued with the lords of the White
Horse and knights

Once mine, and strike him dead, and
meet myself

Death, or I know not what mysterious
doom.

And thou remaining here wilt learn the
event ;

But hither shall I never come again,
Never lie by thy side, see thee no
more,

Farewell ! "

And while she grovelling at his feet,
She felt the King's breath wander
o'er her neck,

And, in the darkness o'er her fallen
head,

Perceived the waving of his hands
that blest.

Then, listening till those armed
steps were gone,

Rose the pale Queen, and in her
anguish found

The casement : " peradventure " so
she thought,

" If I might see his face, and not be
seen."

And lo, he sat on horseback at the
door !

And near him the sad nuns with each
a light

Stood, and he gave them charge about
the Queen,

To guard and foster her for ever-
more.

And while he spake to these his helm
was lower'd,

To which for crest the golden dragon
clung

Of Britain ; so she did not see the face,
Which then was as an angel's, but she

saw,
Wet with the mists and smitten by the
lights,

The Dragon of the great Pendragon-
ship

Blaze, making all the night a steam
of fire.

And even then he turn'd ; and more
and more

The moony vapour rolling round the
King,

Who seem'd the phantom of a Giant
in it,

Enwound him fold by fold, and made
him gray

And grayer, till himself became as
mist

Before her, moving ghostlike to his
doom.

Then she stretch'd out her arms
and cried aloud

" Oh Arthur ! " there her voice brake
suddenly,

Then—as a stream that spouting
from a cliff

Falls in mid air, but gathering at the
base

Re-makes itself, and flashes down the
vale—

Went on in passionate utterance.

" Gone—my lord !
Gone thro' my sin to slay and to be
slain !

And he forgave me, and I could not
speak.

Farewell ? I should have answer'd his
farewell.

His mercy choked me. Gone, my
lord the King,

My own true lord ! how dare I call him
mine ?

The shadow of another cleaves to me,
And makes me one pollution : he, the
King,

Call'd me polluted : shall I kill my-
self ?

What help in that ? I cannot kill my
sin,

If soul be soul ; nor can I kill my shame ;
 No, nor by living can I live it down.
 The days will grow to weeks, the weeks to months,
 The months will add themselves and make the years,
 The years will roll into the centuries,
 And mine will ever be a name of scorn.
 I must not dwell on that defeat of fame.
 Let the world be ; that is but of the world.
 What else ? what hope ? I think there was a hope,
 Except he mock'd me when he spake of hope ;
 His hope he call'd it ; but he never mocks,
 For mockery is the fume of little hearts.
 And blessed be the King, who hath forgiven
 My wickedness to him, and left me hope
 That in mine own heart I can live down sin
 And be his mate hereafter in the heavens
 Before high God. Ah great and gentle lord,
 Who wast, as is the conscience of a saint
 Among his warring senses, to thy knights—
 To whom my false voluptuous pride, that took
 Full easily all impressions from below,
 Would not look up, or half-despised the height
 To which I would not or I could not climb—
 I thought I could not breathe in that fine air
 That pure severity of perfect light—
 I wanted warmth and colour which I found
 In Lancelot—now I see thee what thou art,
 Thou art the highest and most human too,

Not Lancelot, nor another. Is there none
 Will tell the King I love him tho' so late ?
 Now—ere he goes to the great Battle? none :
 Myself must tell him in that purer life,
 But now it were too daring. Ah my God,
 What might I not have made of thy fair world,
 Had I but loved thy highest creature here ?
 It was my duty to have loved the highest :
 It surely was my profit had I known :
 It would have been my pleasure had I seen.
 We needs must love the highest when we see it,
 Not Lancelot, nor another."

Here her hand
 Grasp'd, made her vail her eyes : she look'd and saw
 The novice, weeping, suppliant, and said to her
 " Yea, little maid, for am I not forgiven ? "
 Then glancing up beheld the holy nuns
 All round her, weeping ; and her heart was loosed
 Within her, and she wept with these and said.

"Ye know me then, that wicked one, who broke
 The vast design and purpose of the King.
 O shut me round with narrowing nunnery-walls,
 Meek maidens, from the voices crying ' shame.'
 I must not scorn myself : he loves me still.
 Let no one dream but that he loves me still.
 So let me, if you do not shudder at me
 Nor shun to call me sister, dwell with you ;
 Wear black and white, and be a nun like you ;

Fast with your fasts, not feasting	Which wrought the ruin of my lord
with your feasts ;	the King."
Grieve with your griefs, not grieving	
at your joys,	
But not rejoicing ; mingle with your	She said : they took her to them-
rites ;	selves ; and she
Pray and be pray'd for ; lie before	Still hoping, fearing "is it yet too
your shrines ;	late ?"
Do each low office of your holy	Dwelt with them, till in time their
house ;	Abbess died.
Walk your dim cloister, and distri-	Then she, for her good deeds and her
bute dole	pure life,
To poor sick people, richer in his	And for the power of ministration in
eyes	her,
Who ransom'd us, and haler too than	And likewise for the high rank she
I ;	had borne,
And treat their loathsome hurts and	Was chosen Abbess, there, an Abbess,
heal mine own ;	lived
And so wear out in almsdeed and in	For three brief years, and there, an
prayer	Abbess, past
The sombre close of that voluptuous	To where beyond these voices there
day,	is peace.

ENOCH ARDEN, AND OTHER POEMS

ENOCH ARDEN

LONG lines of cliff breaking have left
a chasm ;
And in the chasm are foam and
yellow sands ;
Beyond, red roofs about a narrow
wharf
In cluster ; then a moulder'd church ;
and higher
A long street climbs to one tall-
tower'd mill ;
And high in heaven behind it a gray
down
With Danish barrows ; and a hazel-
wood,
By autumn nutters haunted, flourishes
Green in a cuplike hollow of the down.

Here on this beach a hundred years
ago,
Three children of three houses, Annie
Lee,
The prettiest little damsel in the port,
And Philip Ray the miller's only son,
And Enoch Arden, a rough sailor's
lad
Made orphan by a winter shipwreck,
play'd
Among the waste and lumber of the
shore,
Hard coils of cordage, swarthy fish-
ing-nets,
Anchors of rusty fluke, and boats up-
drawn :
And built their castles of dissolving
sand
To watch them overflow'd, or follow-
ing up
And flying the white breaker, daily
left
The little footprint daily wash'd
away.

A narrow cave ran in beneath the
cliff :

In this the children play'd at keeping
house.

Enoch was host one day, Philip the
next,

While Annie still was mistress ; but
at times

Enoch would hold possession for a
week :

" This is my house and this my little
wife."

" Mine too " said Philip " turn and
turn about : "

When, if they quarrell'd, Enoch
stronger-made

Was master : then would Philip, his
blue eyes

All flooded with the helpless wrath of
tears,

Shriek out " I hate you, Enoch," and
at this

The little wife would weep for com-
pany,

And pray them not to quarrel for
her sake,

And say she would be little wife to
both.

But when the dawn of rosy child-
hood past,

And the new warmth of life's ascend-
ing sun

Was felt by either, either fixt his
heart

On that one girl ; and Enoch spoke
his love,

But Philip loved in silence ; and the
girl

Seem'd kinder unto Philip than to
him ;

But she loved Enoch ; tho' she knew
it not,

And would if ask'd deny it. Enoch
 set
 A purpose evermore before his eyes,
 To hoard all savings to the uttermost,
 To purchase his own boat, and make
 a home
 For Annie : and so prosper'd that at
 last
 A luckier or a bolder fisherman,
 A carefuller in peril, did not breathe
 For leagues along that breaker-
 beaten coast
 Than Enoch. Likewise had he
 serv'd a year
 On board a merchantman, and made
 himself
 Full sailor ; and he thrice had pluck'd
 a life
 From the dread sweep of the down-
 streaming seas :
 And all men look'd upon him favour-
 ably :
 And ere he touch'd his one-and-
 twentieth May
 He purchased his own boat, and made
 a home
 For Annie, neat and nestlike, halfway
 up
 The narrow street that clamber'd
 toward the mill.

Then, on a golden autumn even-
 tide,
 The younger people making holiday,
 With bag and sack and basket, great
 and small,
 Went nutting to the hazels. Philip
 stay'd
 (His father lying sick and needing
 him)
 An hour behind ; but as he climb'd
 the hill,
 Just where the prone edge of the
 wood began
 To feather toward the hollow, saw the
 pair,
 Enoch and Annie, sitting hand-in-
 hand,
 His large gray eyes and weather-
 beaten face
 All-kindled by a still and sacred fire,
 That burn'd as on an altar. Philip
 look'd,

And in their eyes and faces read his
 doom ;
 Then, as their faces drew together,
 groan'd,
 And slipt aside, and like a wounded
 life
 Crept down into the hollows of the
 wood ;
 There, while the rest were loud in
 merrymaking,
 Had his dark hour unseen, and rose
 and past
 Bearing a lifelong hunger in his heart.

So these were wed, and merrily
 rang the bells,
 And merrily ran the years, seven
 happy years,
 Seven happy years of health and
 competence,
 And mutual love and honourable
 toil ;
 With children ; first a daughter. In
 him woke,
 With his first babe's first cry, the
 noble wish
 To save all earnings to the utter-
 most,
 And give his child a better bringing-
 up
 Than his had been, or hers ; a wish
 renew'd,
 When two years after came a boy to
 be
 The rosy idol of her solitudes,
 While Enoch was abroad on wrathful
 seas,
 Or often journeying landward ; for in
 truth
 Enoch's white horse, and Enoch's
 ocean-spoil
 In ocean-smelling osier, and his face,
 Rough-redden'd with a thousand
 winter gales,
 Not only to the market-cross were
 known,
 But in the leafy lanes behind the
 down,
 Far as the portal-warding lion-whelp,
 And peacock-yewtree of the lonely
 Hall,
 Whose Friday fare was Enoch's minis-
 tering.

Then came a change, as all things
 human change.
 Ten miles to northward of the narrow
 port
 Open'd a larger haven : thither used
 Enoch at times to go by land or sea ;
 And once when there, and clambering
 on a mast
 In harbour, by mischance he slipt and
 fell :
 A limb was broken when they lifted
 him ;
 And while he lay recovering there,
 his wife
 Bore him another son, a sickly one :
 Another hand crept too across his
 trade
 Taking her bread and theirs : and on
 him fell,
 Altho' a grave and staid God-fearing
 man,
 Yet lying thus inactive, doubt and
 gloom.
 He seem'd, as in a nightmare of the
 night,
 To see his children leading evermore
 Low miserable lives of hand-to-
 mouth,
 And her, he loved, a beggar : then he
 pray'd
 " Save them from this, whatever
 comes to me."
 And while he pray'd, the master of
 that ship
 Enoch had served in, hearing his mis-
 chance,
 Came, for he knew the man and
 valued him,
 Reporting of his vessel China-bound,
 And wanting yet a boatswain. Would
 he go ?
 There yet were many weeks before
 she sail'd,
 Sail'd from this port. Would Enoch
 have the place ?
 And Enoch all at once assented to it,
 Rejoicing at that answer to his
 prayer.
 So now that shadow of mischance
 appear'd
 No graver than as when some little
 cloud
 Cuts off the fiery highway of the sun,
 And isles a light in the offing : yet the
 wife—
 When he was gone—the children—
 what to do ?
 Then Enoch lay long-pondering on
 his plans ;
 To sell the boat—and yet he loved
 her well—
 How many a rough sea had he
 weather'd in her !
 He knew her, as a horseman knows
 his horse—
 And yet to sell her—then with what
 she brought
 Buy goods and stores—set Annie
 forth in trade
 With all that seamen needed or their
 wives—
 So might she keep the house while
 he was gone.
 Should he not trade himself out
 yonder ? go
 This voyage more than once ? yea
 twice or thrice—
 As oft as needed—last, returning rich,
 Become the master of a larger craft,
 With fuller profits lead an easier life,
 Have all his pretty young ones
 educated,
 And pass his days in peace among
 his own.
 Thus Enoch in his heart deter-
 mined all :
 Then moving homeward came on
 Annie pale,
 Nursing the sickly babe, her latest-
 born.
 Forward she started with a happy
 cry,
 And laid the feeble infant in his arms ;
 Whom Enoch took, and handled all
 his limbs,
 Appraised his weight and fondled
 fatherlike,
 But had no heart to break his pur-
 poses
 To Annie, till the morrow, when he
 spoke.
 Then first since Enoch's golden ring
 had girt
 Her finger, Annie fought against his
 will :

Yet not with brawling opposition she,
But manifold entreaties, many a tear,
Many a sad kiss by day by night
renew'd

(Sure that all evil would come out of
it)

Besought him, supplicating, if he
cared

For her or his dear children, not to go.
He not for his own self caring but her,
Her and her children, let her plead in
vain ;

So grieving held his will, and bore it
thro'.

For Enoch parted with his old sea-
friend,

Bought Annie goods and stores, and
set his hand

To fit their little streetward sitting-
room

With shelf and corner for the goods
and stores.

So all day long till Enoch's last at
home,

Shaking their pretty cabin, hammer
and axe,

Auger and saw, while Annie seem'd to
hear

Her own death-scaffold raising,
shrill'd and rang,

Till this was ended, and his careful
hand,—

The space was narrow,—having
order'd all

Almost as neat and close as Nature
packs

Her blossom or her seedling, paused ;
and he,

Who needs would work for Annie to
the last,

Ascending tired, heavily slept till
morn.

And Enoch faced this morning of
farewell

Brightly and boldly. All his Annie's
fears,

Save, as his Annie's, were a laughter
to him.

Yet Enoch as a brave God-fearing
man

Bow'd himself down, and in that
mystery

Where God-in-man is one with man-
in-God,

Pray'd for a blessing on his wife and
babes

Whatever came to him : and then he
said

" Annie, this voyage by the grace of
God

Will bring fair weather yet to all of
us.

Keep a clean hearth and a clear fire
for me,

For I'll be back, my girl, before you
know it."

Then lightly rocking baby's cradle
" and he,

This pretty, puny, weakly little
one,—

Nay—for I love him all the better
for it—

God bless him, he shall sit upon my
knees

And I will tell him tales of foreign
parts,

And make him merry, when I come
home again.

Come Annie, come, cheer up before
I go."

Him running on thus hopefully she
heard,

And almost hoped herself ; but when
he turn'd

The current of his talk to graver
things

In sailor fashion roughly sermonizing
On providence and trust in Heaven,

she heard,
Heard and not heard him ; as the

village girl,
Who sets her pitcher underneath the

spring,
Musing on him that used to fill it

for her,
Hears and not hears, and lets it

overflow.

At length she spoke " O Enoch, you
are wise ;

And yet for all your wisdom well
know I

That I shall look upon your face no
more."

"Well then," said Enoch, "I shall look on yours.

Annie, the ship I sail in passes here (He named the day) get you a sea-man's glass,

Spy out my face, and laugh at all your fears."

But when the last of those last moments came,

"Annie, my girl, cheer up, be comforted,

Look to the babes, and till I come again,

Keep everything shipshape, for I must go.

And fear no more for me; or if you fear

Cast all your cares on God; that anchor holds.

Is He not yonder in those uttermost Parts of the morning? if I flee to these

Can I go from Him? and the sea is His,

The sea is His: He made it."

Enoch rose,

Cast his strong arms about his drooping wife,

And kiss'd his wonder-stricken little ones;

But for the third, the sickly one, who slept

After a night of feverous wakefulness, When Annie would have raised him

Enoch said

"Wake him not; let him sleep; how should the child

Remember this?" and kiss'd him in his cot.

But Annie from her baby's forehead clipt

A tiny curl, and gave it: this he kept Thro' all his future; but now hastily caught

His bundle, waved his hand, and went his way.

She when the day, that Enoch mention'd, came,

Borrow'd a glass, but all in vain: perhaps

She could not fix the glass to suit her eye;

Perhaps her eye was dim, hand tremulous;

She saw him not: and while he stood on deck

Waving, the moment and the vessel past.

Ev'n to the last dip of the vanishing sail

She watch'd it, and departed weeping for him;

Then, tho' she mourn'd his absence as his grave,

Set her sad will no less to chime with his,

But throve not in her trade, not being bred

To barter, nor compensating the want By shrewdness, neither capable of lies,

Nor asking overmuch and taking less, And still foreboding "what would

Enoch say?"

For more than once, in days of difficulty

And pressure, had she sold her wares for less

Than what she gave in buying what she sold:

She fail'd and sadden'd knowing it; and thus,

Expectant of that news which never came,

Gain'd for her own a scanty sustenance,

And lived a life of silent melancholy.

Now the third child was sickly-born and grew

Yet sicklier, tho' the mother cared for it

With all a mother's care: nevertheless,

Whether her business often call'd her from it,

Or thro' the want of what it needed most,

Or means to pay the voice who best could tell

What most it needed—howsoever it was,

After a lingering—ere she was
aware,—
Like the caged bird escaping sud-
denly,
The little innocent soul flitted away.

In that same week when Annie
buried it,
Philip's true heart, which hunger'd
for her peace
(Since Enoch left he had not look'd
upon her),
Smote him, as having kept aloof so
long.
"Surely " said Philip " I may see her
now,
May be some little comfort ; " there-
fore went,
Past thro' the solitary room in front,
Paused for a moment at an inner
door,
Then struck it thrice, and, no one
opening,
Enter'd ; but Annie, seated with her
grief,
Fresh from the burial of her little one,
Car'd not to look on any human face,
But turn'd her own toward the wall
and wept.
Then Philip standing up said falter-
ingly
" Annie, I came to ask a favour of
you."

He spoke ; the passion in her
moan'd reply
" Favour from one so sad and so for-
lorn
As I am ! " half abash'd him ; yet
unask'd,
His bashfulness and tenderness at
war,
He set himself beside her, saying to
her :
" I came to speak to you of what
he wish'd,
Enoch, your husband : I have ever
said
You chose the best among us—a
strong man
For where he fixt his heart he set his
hand
To do the thing he will'd, and bore it
thro'.

And wherefore did he go this weary
way,
And leave you lonely ? not to see the
world—
For pleasure ?—nay, but for the
wherewithal
To give his babes a better bringing-up
Than his had been, or yours : that
was his wish.
And if he come again, vex will he be
To find the precious morning hours
were lost.
And it would vex him even in his
grave,
If he could know his babes were run-
ning wild
Like colts about the waste. So,
Annie, now—
Have we not known each other all
our lives ?
I do beseech you by the love you bear
Him and his children not to say me
nay—
For, if you will, when Enoch comes
again
Why then he shall repay me—if you
will,
Annie—for I am rich and well-to-do.
Now let me put the boy and girl to
school :
This is the favour that I came to ask."

Then Annie with her brows against
the wall
Answer'd " I cannot look you in the
face ;
I seem so foolish and so broken down.
When you came in my sorrow broke
me down ;
And now I think your kindness breaks
me down ;
But Enoch lives ; that is borne in on
me :
He will repay you : money can be
repaid ;
Not kindness such as yours."

And Philip ask'd
" Then you will let me, Annie ? "

There she turn'd,
She rose, and fixt her swimming eyes
upon him,

And dwelt a moment on his kindly
face,
Then calling down a blessing on his
head
Caught at his hand, and wrung it
passionately,
And past into the little garth beyond.
So lifted up in spirit he moved away.

Then Philip put the boy and girl
to school,
And bought them needful books, and
everyway,
Like one who does his duty by his
own.
Made himself theirs; and tho' for
Annie's sake,
Fearing the lazy gossip of the port,
He oft denied his heart his dearest
wish,
And seldom crost her threshold, yet
he sent
Gifts by the children, garden-herbs
and fruit,
The late and early roses from his wall,
Or conies from the down, and now and
then,
With some pretext of fineness in the
meal
To save the offence of charitable,
flour
From his tall mill that whistled on
the waste.

But Philip did not fathom Annie's
mind:
Scarce could the woman when he
came upon her,
Out of full heart and boundless grati-
tude
Light on a broken word to thank him
with.
But Philip was her children's all-in-all;
From distant corners of the street
they ran
To greet his hearty welcome heartily;
Lords of his house and of his mill were
they;
Worried his passive ear with petty
wrongs
Or pleasures, hung upon him, play'd
with him
And call'd him Father Philip. Philip
gain'd

As Enoch lost; for Enoch seem'd to
them
Uncertain as a vision or a dream,
Faint as a figure seen in early dawn
Down at the far end of an avenue,
Going we know not where: and so
ten years,
Since Enoch left his hearth and
native land,
Fled forward, and no news of Enoch
came.

It chanced one evening Annie's
children long'd
To go with others, nutting to the
wood,
And Annie would go with them; then
they begg'd
For Father Philip (as they call'd him)
too:
Him, like the working bee in blossom-
dust,
Blanch'd with his mill, they found;
and saying to him
"Come with us Father Philip" he
denied;
But when the children pluck'd at him
to go,
He laugh'd, and yielded readily to
their wish,
For was not Annie with them? and
they went.

But after scaling half the weary
down,
Just where the prone edge of the
wood began
To feather toward the hollow, all her
force
Fail'd her; and sighing "let me rest"
she said:
So Philip rested with her well-con-
tent;
While all the younger ones with jubi-
lant cries
Broke from their elders, and tumult-
uously
Down thro' the whitening hazels made
a plunge
To the bottom, and dispersed, and
bent or broke
The lithe reluctant boughs to tear
away

Their tawny clusters, crying to each other
And calling, here and there, about the wood.

But Philip sitting at her side forgot
Her presence, and remember'd one dark hour

Here in this wood, when like a wounded life

He crept into the shadow : at last he said

Lifting his honest forehead " Listen, Annie,

How merry they are down yonder in the wood."

" Tired, Annie ? " for she did not speak a word.

" Tired ? " but her face had fall'n upon her hands ;

At which, as with a kind of anger in him,

" The ship was lost " he said " the ship was lost.

No more of that ! why should you kill yourself

And make them orphans quite ? " And Annie said

" I thought not of it : but—I know not why—

Their voices make me feel so solitary."

Then Philip coming somewhat closer spoke.

" Annie, there is a thing upon my mind,

And it has been upon my mind so long,

That tho' I know not when it first came there,

I know that it will out at last. O Annie,

It is beyond all hope, against all chance,

That he who left you ten long years ago

Should still be living ; well then—let me speak :

I grieve to see you poor and wanting help :

I cannot help you as I wish to do Unless—they say that women are so

quick—

Perhaps you know what I would have you know—

I wish you for my wife. I fain would prove

A father to your children : I do think They love me as a father : I am sure That I love them as if they were mine own ;

And I believe, if you were fast my wife, That after all these sad uncertain years,

We might be still as happy as God grants

To any of His creatures. Think upon it :

For I am well-to-do—no kin, no care, No burthen, save my care for you and yours :

And we have known each other all our lives,

And I have loved you longer than you know."

Then answer'd Annie ; tenderly she spoke :

" You have been as God's good angel in our house.

God bless you for it, God reward you for it,

Philip, with something happier than myself.

Can one love twice ? can you be ever loved

As Enoch was ? what is it that you ask ? "

" I am content " he answer'd " to be loved

A little after Enoch." " O " she cried Scared as it were " dear Philip, wait

a while :

If Enoch comes—but Enoch will not come—

Yet wait a year, a year is not so long : Surely I shall be wiser in a year :

O wait a little ! " Philip sadly said Annie, as I have waited all my life

I well may wait a little." " Nay " she cried

" I am bound : you have my promise—in a year :

Will you not bide your year as I bide mine ? "

And Philip answer'd " I will bide my year."

Here both were mute, till Philip
 glancing up
 Beheld the dead flame of the fallen
 day
 Pass from the Danish barrow over-
 head ;
 Then fearing night and chill for Annie
 rose,
 And sent his voice beneath him thro'
 the wood.
 Up came the children laden with their
 spoil ;
 Then all descended to the port, and
 there
 At Annie's door he paused and gave
 his hand,
 Saying gently " Annie, when I spoke
 to you,
 That was your hour of weakness. I
 was wrong.
 I am always bound to you, but you
 are free."
 Then Annie weeping answer'd " I
 am bound."

She spoke ; and in one moment as
 it were,
 While yet she went about her house-
 hold ways,
 Ev'n as she dwelt upon his latest
 words,
 That he had loved her longer than
 she knew,
 That autumn into autumn flash'd
 again,
 And there he stood once more before
 her face,
 Claiming her promise. " Is it a year ?"
 she ask'd.
 " Yes, if the nuts " he said " be ripe
 again :
 Come out and see." But she—she
 put him off—
 So much to look to—such a change—
 a month—
 Give her a month—she knew that she
 was bound—
 A month—no more. Then Philip
 with his eyes
 Full of that lifelong hunger, and his
 voice
 Shaking a little like a drunkard's
 hand,

" Take your own time, Annie, take
 your own time."
 And Annie could have wept for pity
 of him ;
 And yet she held him on delayingly
 With many a scarce-believable excuse,
 Trying his truth and his long-suffer-
 ance,
 Till half-another year had slipt away.

By this the lazy gossips of the port,
 Abhorrent of a calculation crost,
 Began to chafe as at a personal wrong.
 Some thought that Philip did but
 trifle with her ;
 Some that she but held off to draw
 him on ;
 And others laugh'd at her and Philip
 too,
 As simple folk that knew not their
 own minds ;
 And one, in whom all evil fancies
 clung
 Like serpent eggs together, laughingly
 Would hint at worse in either. Her
 own son
 Was silent, tho' he often look'd his
 wish ;
 But evermore the daughter prest
 upon her
 To wed the man so dear to all of them
 And lift the household out of poverty ;
 And Philip's rosy face contracting
 grew
 Careworn and wan ; and all these
 things fell on her
 Sharp as reproach.

At last one night it chanced
 That Annie could not sleep, but
 earnestly
 Pray'd for a sign " my Enoch is he
 gone ? "
 Then compass'd round by the blind
 wall of night
 Brook'd not the expectant terror of
 her heart,
 Started from bed, and struck herself
 a light,
 Then desperately seized the holy
 Book,
 Suddenly set it wide to find a sign,
 Suddenly put her finger on the text,

"Under a palmtree." That was
 nothing to her.
 No meaning there: she closed the
 Book and slept:
 When lo! her Enoch sitting on a
 height,
 Under a palmtree, over him the Sun:
 "He is gone" she thought "he is
 happy, he is singing
 Hosanna in the highest yonder shines
 The Sun of Righteousness, and these
 be palms
 Whereof the happy people strowing
 cried
 'Hosanna in the highest!'" Here
 she woke,
 Resolved, sent for him and said
 wildly to him
 "There is no reason why we should
 not wed."
 "Then for God's sake," he answer'd,
 "both our sakes,
 So you will wed me, let it be at once."

 So these were wed and merrily rang
 the bells,
 Merrily rang the bells and they were
 wed.
 But never merrily beat Annie's heart.
 A footstep seem'd to fall beside her
 path,
 She knew not whence; a whisper on
 her ear,
 She knew not what; nor loved she to
 be left
 Alone at home, nor ventured out
 alone.
 What ail'd her then, that ere she
 enter'd, often
 Her hand dwelt lingeringly on the
 latch,
 Fearing to enter: Philip thought he
 knew:
 Such doubts and fears were common
 to her state,
 Being with child: but when her child
 was born,
 Then her new child was as herself
 renew'd,
 Then the new mother came about her
 heart,
 Then her good Philip was her all-in-all,
 And that mysterious instinct wholly
 died.

 And where was Enoch? prosper-
 ously sail'd
 The ship "Good Fortune," tho' at
 setting forth
 The Biscay, roughly ridging eastward,
 shook
 And almost overwhelm'd her, yet
 unvex'd
 She slept across the summer of the
 world,
 Then after a long tumble about the
 Cape
 And frequent interchange of foul and
 fair,
 She passing thro' the summer world
 again,
 The breath of heaven came continually
 And sent her sweetly by the golden
 isles,
 Till silent in her oriental haven.

 There Enoch traded for himself, and
 bought
 Quaint monsters for the market of
 those times,
 A gilded dragon, also, for the babes.

 Less lucky her home-voyage: at
 first indeed
 Thro' many a fair sea-circle, day by
 day,
 Scarce-rocking, her full-busted figure-
 head
 Stared o'er the ripple feathering from
 her bows:
 Then follow'd calms, and then winds
 variable,
 Then baffling, a long course of them;
 and last
 Storm, such as drove her under
 moonless heavens
 Till hard upon the cry of "breakers"
 came
 The crash of ruin, and the loss of all
 But Enoch and two others. Half
 the night,
 Buoy'd upon floating tackle and
 broken spars,
 These drifted, stranding on an isle at
 morn
 Rich, but the loneliest in a lonely
 sea.

 No want was there of human sus-
 tenance,

Soft fruitage, mighty nuts, and
 nourishing roots ;
 Nor save for pity was it hard to take
 The helpless life so wild that it was
 tame.
 There in a seaward-gazing mountain-
 gorge
 They built, and thatch'd with leaves
 of palm, a hut,
 Half hut, half native cavern. So the
 three,
 Set in this Eden of all plenteousness,
 Dwelt with eternal summer, ill-
 content.

For one, the youngest, hardly more
 than boy,
 Hurt in that night of sudden ruin and
 wreck,
 Lay lingering out a three-years'
 death-in-life.
 They could not leave him. After he
 was gone,
 The two remaining found a fallen
 stem ;
 And Enoch's comrade, careless of
 himself,
 Fire-hollowing this in Indian fashion,
 fell
 Sun-stricken, and that other lived
 alone.
 In those two deaths he read God's
 warning "wait."

The mountain wooded to the peak,
 the lawns
 And winding glades high up like
 ways to Heaven,
 The slender coco's drooping crown
 of plumes,
 The lightning flash of insect and of
 bird,
 The lustre of the long convolvuluses
 That coil'd around the stately stems,
 and ran
 Ev'n to the limit of the land, the
 glows
 And glories of the broad belt of the
 world,
 All these he saw ; but what he fain
 had seen
 He could not see, the kindly human
 face,

Nor ever hear a kindly voice, but
 heard
 The myriad shriek of wheeling ocean-
 fowl,
 The league-long roller thundering on
 the reef,
 The moving whisper of huge trees
 that branch'd
 And blossom'd in the zenith, or the
 sweep
 Of some precipitous rivulet to the
 wave,
 As down the shore he ranged, or all
 day long
 Sat often in the seaward-gazing
 gorge,
 A shipwreck'd sailor, waiting for a
 sail :
 No sail from day to day, but every
 day
 The sunrise broken into scarlet
 shafts
 Among the palms and ferns and
 precipices ;
 The blaze upon the waters to the east ;
 The blaze upon his island overhead ;
 The blaze upon the waters to the
 west ;
 Then the great stars that globed
 themselves in Heaven,
 The hollower-bellowing ocean, and
 again
 The scarlet shafts of sunrise—but no
 sail.

There often as he watch'd or seem'd
 to watch,
 So still, the golden lizard on him
 paused,
 A phantom made of many phantoms
 moved
 Before him haunting him, or he him-
 self
 Moved haunting people, things and
 places, known
 Far in a darker isle beyond the line ;
 The babes, their babble, Annie, the
 small house,
 The climbing street, the mill, the
 leafy lanes,
 The peacock-yewtree and the lonely
 Hall,
 The horse he drove, the boat he sold,
 the chill

November dawns and dewy-glooming
downs,
The gentle shower, the smell of dying
leaves,
And the low moan of leaden-colour'd
seas.

Once likewise, in the ringing of his
ears,
Tho' faintly, merrily—far and far
away—
He heard the pealing of his parish
bells ;
Then, tho' he knew not wherefore,
started up
Shuddering, and when the beauteous
hateful isle
Return'd upon him, had not his poor
heart
Spoken with That, which being every-
where
Lets none, who speaks with Him,
seem all alone,
Surely the man had died of solitude.

Thus over Enoch's early-silvering
head
The sunny and rainy seasons came
and went
Year after year. His hopes to see
his own,
And pace the sacred old familiar
fields,
Not yet had perish'd, when his lonely
doom
Came suddenly to an end. Another
ship
(She wanted water) blown by baffling
winds,
Like the Good Fortune, from her
destined course,
Stay'd by this isle, not knowing where
she lay :
For since the mate had seen at early
dawn
Across a break on the mist-wreathen
isle
The silent water slipping from the
hills,
They sent a crew that landing burst
away
In search of stream or fount, and
fill'd the shores

With clamour. Downward from his
mountain gorge
Stept the long-hair'd long-bearded
solitary,
Brown, looking hardly human,
strangely clad,
Muttering and mumbling, idiotlike
it seem'd,
With inarticulate rage, and making
signs
They knew not what : and yet he led
the way
To where the rivulets of sweet water
ran ;
And ever as he mingled with the
crew,
And heard them talking, his long-
bounden tongue
Was loosen'd, till he made them under-
stand ;
Whom, when their casks were fill'd
they took aboard :
And there the tale he utter'd brokenly,
Scarce credited at first but more and
more,
Amazed and melted all who listen'd
to it :
And clothes they gave him and free
passage home ;
But oft he work'd among the rest
and shook
His isolation from him. None of
these
Came from his county, or could
answer him,
If question'd, aught of what he cared
to know.
And dull the voyage was with long
delays,
The vessel scarce sea-worthy ; but
evermore
His fancy fled before the lazy wind
Returning, till beneath a clouded
moon
He like a lover down thro' all his blood
Drew in the dewy meadowy morning-
breath
Of England, blown across her ghostly
wall :
And that same morning officers and
men
Levied a kindly tax upon themselves,
Pitying the lonely man, and gave
him it :

Then moving up the coast they landed
him,
Ev'n in that harbour whence he sail'd
before.

There Enoch spoke no word to
anyone,
But homeward—home—what home?
had he a home?
His home, he walk'd. Bright was
that afternoon,
Sunny but chill; till drawn thro'
either chasm,
Where either haven open'd on the
deeps,
Roll'd a sca-haze and whelm'd the
world in gray;
Cut off the length of highway on
before,
And left but narrow breadth to left
and right
Of wither'd holt or tilth or pasturage.
On the nigh-naked tree the Robin
piped
Disconsolate, and thro the dripping
haze
The dead weight of the dead leaf
bore it down:
Thicker the drizzle grew, deeper the
gloom;
Last, as it seem'd, a great mist-blotted
light
Flared on him, and he came upon the
place.

Then down the long street having
slowly stolen,
His heart foreshadowing all calamity,
His eyes upon the stones, he reach'd
the home
Where Annie lived and loved him,
and his babes
In those far-off seven happy years
were born;
But finding neither light nor murmur
there
(A bill of sale gleam'd thro' the
drizzle) crept
Still downward thinking "dead or
dead to me!"

Down to the pool and narrow wharf
he went,

Seeking a tavern which of old he
knew,
A front of timber-crost antiquity,
So propt, worm-eaten, ruinously old,
He thought it must have gone; but he
was gone
Who kept it; and his widow, Miriam
Lane,
With daily-dwindling profits held
the house;
A haunt of brawling seamen once, but
now
Still, with yet a bed for wandering
men.
There Enoch rested silent many days.

But Miriam Lane was good and
garrulous,
Nor let him be, but often breaking in,
Told him, with other annals of the
port,
Not knowing—Enoch was so brown,
so bow'd,
So broken—all the story of his house.
His baby's death, her growing
poverty,
How Philip put her little ones to
school,
And kept them in it, his long wooing
her,
Her slow consent, and marriage, and
the birth
Of Philip's child: and o'er his coun-
tenance
No shadow past, nor motion: any-
one,
Regarding, well had deem'd he felt
the tale
Less than the teller: only when she
closed
"Enoch, poor man, was cast away
and lost"
He, shaking his gray head pathetic-
ally,
Repeated muttering "cast away and
lost;"
Again in deeper inward whispers
"lost!"

But Enoch yearn'd to see her face
again;
"If I might look on her sweet face
again

And know that she is happy." So the thought
 Haunted and harass'd him, and drove him forth,
 At evening when the dull November day
 Was growing duller twilight, to the hill.
 There he sat down gazing on all below ;
 There did a thousand memories roll upon him,
 Unspeakable for sadness. By and by
 The ruddy square of comfortable light,
 Far-blazing from the rear of Philip's house,
 Allured him, as the beacon-blaze allures
 The bird of passage, till he madly strikes
 Against it, and beats out his weary life.

For Philip's dwelling fronted on the street,
 The latest house to landward ; but behind,
 With one small gate that open'd on the waste,
 Flourish'd a little garden square and wall'd :
 And in it throve an ancient evergreen,
 A yewtree, and all round it ran a walk
 Of shingle, and a walk divided it :
 But Enoch shunn'd the middle walk and stole
 Up by the wall, behind the yew ; and thence
 That which he better might have shunn'd, if griefs
 Like his have worse or better, Enoch

For cups and silver on the burnish'd board
 Sparkled and shone ; so genial was the hearth :
 And on the right hand of the hearth he saw
 Philip, the slighted suitor of old times,
 Stout, rosy, with his babe across his knees ;

And o'er her second father stoopt a girl,
 A later but a loftier Annie Lee,
 Fair-hair'd and tall, and from her lifted hand
 Dangled a length of ribbon and a ring
 To tempt the babe, who rear'd his creasy arms,
 Caught at and ever miss'd it, and they laugh'd :
 And on the left hand of the hearth he saw
 The mother glancing often toward her babe,
 But turning now and then to speak with him,
 Her son, who stood beside her tall and strong,
 And saying that which pleased him, for he smiled.

Now when the dead man come to life beheld
 His wife his wife no more, and saw the babe
 Hers, yet not his, upon the father's knee,
 And all the warmth, the peace, the happiness,
 And his own children tall and beautiful,
 And him, that other, reigning in his place,
 Lord of his rights and of his children's love,—
 Then he, tho' Miriam Lane had told him all,
 Because things seen are mightier than things heard,
 Stagger'd and shook, holding the branch, and fear'd
 To send abroad a shrill and terrible cry,
 Which in one moment, like the blast of doom,
 Would shatter all the happiness of the hearth.

He therefore turning softly like a thief,
 Lest the harsh shingle should grate underfoot,
 And feeling all along the garden-wall,

Lest he should swoon and tumble and
be found,
Crept to the gate, and open'd it, and
closed,
As lightly as a sick man's chamber-
door,
Behind him, and came out upon the
waste.

And there he would have knelt,
but that his knees
Were feeble, so that falling prone he
dug
His fingers into the wet earth, and
pray'd.

"Too hard to bear! why did they
take me thence?
O God Almighty, blessed Saviour,
Thou
That did'st uphold me on my lonely
isle,
Uphold me, Father, in my loneliness
A little longer! aid me, give me
strength
Not to tell her, never to let her know.
Help me not to break in upon her
peace.
My children too! must I not speak to
these?
They know me not. I should betray
myself.
Never: no father's kiss for me—the
girl
So like her mother, and the boy, my
son."

There speech and thought and
nature fail'd a little,
And he lay tranced; but when he rose
and paced
Back toward his solitary home again,
All down the long and narrow street
he went
Beating it in upon his weary brain,
As tho' it were the burthen of a song.
"Not to tell her, never to let her
know."

He was not all unhappy. His re-
solve
Upbore him, and firm faith, and ever-
more

Prayer from a living source within
the will,
And beating up thro' all the bitter
world,
Like fountains of sweet water in the
sea,
Kept him a living soul. "This
miller's wife"
He said to Miriam "that you told me
of,
Has she no fear that her first husband
lives?"
"Ay, ay, poor soul" said Miriam,
"fear enow!
If you could tell her you had seen him
dead,
Why, that would be her comfort;"
and he thought
"After the Lord has call'd me she
shall know,
I wait His time" and Enoch set him-
self,
Scorning an alms, to work whereby to
live.
Almost to all things could he turn his
hand.
Cooper he was and carpenter, and
wrought
To make the boatmen fishing-nets, or
help'd
At lading and unlading the tall barks,
That brought the stunted commerce
of those days;
Thus earn'd a scanty living for him-
self:
Yet since he did but labour for him-
self,
Work without hope, there was not
life in it
Whereby the man could live; and as
the year
Roll'd itself round again to meet the
day
When Enoch had return'd, a languor
came
Upon him, gentle sickness, gradually
Weakening the man, till he could do
no more,
But kept the house, his chair, and last
his bed.
And Enoch bore his weakness cheer-
fully.
For sure no gladlier does the stranded
wreck

See thro' the gray skirts of a lifting squall
 The boat that bears the hope of life approach
 To save the life despair'd of, than he saw
 Death dawning on him, and the close of all.

For thro' that dawning gleam'd a kindlier hope
 On Enoch thinking "after I am gone, Then may she learn I loved her to the last."
 He call'd aloud for Miriam Lane and said
 "Woman, I have a secret—only swear,
 Before I tell you—swear upon the book
 Not to reveal it, till you see me dead."
 "Dead" clamour'd the good woman "hear him talk!
 I warrant, man, that we shall bring you round."
 "Swear" added Enoch sternly "on the book."
 And on the book, half-frighted, Miriam swore.
 Then Enoch rolling his gray eyes upon her,
 "Did you know Enoch Arden of this town?"
 "Know him?" she said "I knew him far away.
 Ay, ay, I mind him coming down the street;
 Held his head high, and cared for no man, he."
 Slowly and sadly Enoch answer'd her;
 "His head is low, and no man cares for him.
 I think I have not three days more to live;
 I am the man." At which the woman gave
 A half-incredulous, half-hysterical cry.
 "You Arden, you! nay,—sure he was a foot
 Higher than you be." Enoch said again

"My God has bow'd me down to what I am;
 My grief and solitude have broken me;
 Nevertheless, know you that I am he
 Who married—but that name has twice been changed—
 I married her who married Philip Ray.
 Sit, listen." Then he told her of his voyage,
 His wreck, his lonely life, his coming back,
 His gazing in on Annie, his resolve, And how he kept it. As the woman heard,
 Fast flow'd the current of her easy tears,
 While in her heart she yearn'd incessantly
 To rush abroad all round the little haven,
 Proclaiming Enoch Arden and his woes;
 But awed and promise-bounden she forbore,
 Saying only "See your bairns before you go!
 Eh, let me fetch 'em, Arden," and arose
 Eager to bring them down, for Enoch hung
 A moment on her words, but then replied.

"Woman, disturb me not now at the last,
 But let me hold my purpose till I die.
 Sit down again; mark me and understand,
 While I have power to speak. I charge you now,
 When you shall see her, tell her that I died
 Blessing her, praying for her, loving her;
 Save for the bar between us, loving her
 As when she laid her head beside my own.
 And tell my daughter Annie, whom I saw
 So like her mother, that my latest breath

Was spent in blessing her and praying
for her.

And tell my son that I died blessing
him.

And say to Philip that I blest him
too ;

He never meant us any thing but
good.

But if my children care to see me
dead,

Who hardly knew me living, let them
come,

I am their father ; but she must not
come,

For my dead face would vex her after-
life.

And now there is but one of all my
blood,

Who will embrace me in the world-to-
be :

This hair is his : she cut it off and
gave it,

And I have borne it with me all these
years,

And thought to bear it with me to my
grave ;

But now my mind is changed, for I
shall see him,

My babe in bliss : wherefore when I
am gone,

Take, give her this, for it may comfort
her :

It will moreover be a token to her,
That I am he."

He ceased ; and Miriam Lane
Made such a voluble answer pro-
mising all,

That once again he roll'd his eyes
upon her

Repeating all he wish'd, and once
again

She promised.

Then the third night after this,
While Enoch slumber'd motionless
and pale,

And Miriam watch'd and dozed at
intervals,

There came so loud a calling of the
sea,

That all the houses in the haven rang.
He woke, he rose, he spread his arms
abroad

Crying with a loud voice " a sail ! a
sail !

I am saved ; " and so fell back and
spoke no more.

So past the strong heroic soul
away.

And when they buried him the little
port

Had seldom seen a costlier funeral.

AYLMER'S FIELD

1793

Dust are our frames ; and, gilded
dust, our pride

Looks only for a moment whole and
sound ;

Like that long-buried body of the
king,

Found lying with his urns and orna-
ments,

Which at a touch of light, an air of
heaven,

Slit into ashes and was found no
more.

Here is a story which in rougher
shape

Came from a grizzled cripple, whom
I saw

Sunning himself in a waste field
alone—

Old, and a mine of memories—who
had served,

Long since, a bygone Rector of the
place,

And been himself a part of what he
told.

SIR AYLMEY AYLMEY that almighty
man,

The county God—in whose capacious
hall,

Hung with a' hundred shields, the
family tree

Sprang from the midriff of a prostrate
king—

Whose blazing wyvern weathercock'd
the spire,

Stood from his walls and wing'd his
entry-gates

And swang besides on many a windy sign—
 Whose eyes from under a pyramidal head
 Saw from his windows nothing save his own—
 What lovelier of his own had he than her,
 His only child, his Edith, whom he loved
 As heiress and not heir regretfully ?
 But " he that marries her marries her name "
 This fiat somewhat soothed himself and wife,
 His wife a faded beauty of the Baths,
 Insipid as the Queen upon a card ;
 Her all of thought and bearing hardly more
 Than his own shadow in a sickly sun.

A land of hops and poppy-mingled corn,
 Little about it stirring save a brook !
 A sleepy land where under the same wheel
 The same old rut would deepen year by year ;
 Where almost all the village had one name ;
 Where Aylmer follow'd Aylmer at the Hall
 And Averill Averill at the Rectory
 Thrice over ; so that Rectory and Hall,
 Bound in an immemorial intimacy,
 Were open to each other ; tho' to dream
 That Love could bind them closer well had, made
 The hoar hair of the Baronet bristle up
 With horror, worse than had he heard his priest
 Preach an inverted scripture, sons of men
 Daughters of God ; so sleepy was the land.

And might not Averill, had he will'd it so,
 Somewhere beneath his own low range of roofs,

Have also set his many-shielded tree ?
 There was an Aylmer-Averill marriage once,
 When the red rose was redder than itself,
 And York's white rose as red as Lancaster's,
 With wounded peace which each had prick'd to death.
 " Not proven " Averill said, or laughingly
 " Some other race of Averills "—prov'n or no,
 What cared he ? what, if other or the same ?
 He lean'd not on his fathers but himself.
 But Leolin, his brother, living oft
 With Averill, and a year or two before
 Call'd to the bar, but ever call'd away
 By one low voice to one dear neighbourhood,
 Would often, in his walks with Edith, claim
 A distant kinship to the gracious blood
 That shook the heart of Edith hearing him.

Sanguine he was : a but less vivid hue
 Than of that islet in the chestnut-bloom
 Flamed in his cheek ; and eager eyes, that still
 Took joyful note of all things joyful, beam'd,
 Beneath a manelike mass of rolling gold,
 Their best and brightest, when they dwelt on hers,
 Edith, whose pensive beauty, perfect else,
 But subject to the season or the mood,
 Shone like a mystic star between the less
 And greater glory varying to and fro,
 We know not wherefore ; bounteously made,
 And yet so finely, that a troublous touch

Thinn'd, or would seem to thin her in
 a day,
 A joyous to dilate, as toward the
 light.
 And these had been together from the
 first.
 Leolin's first nurse was, five years
 after, hers :
 So much the boy foreran ; but when
 his date
 Doubled her own, for want of play-
 mates, he
 (Since Averill was a decad and a half
 His elder, and their parents under-
 ground)
 Had tost his ball and flown his kite,
 and roll'd
 His hoop to pleasure Edith, with her
 dipt
 Against the rush of the air in the
 prone swing,
 Made blossom-ball or daisy-chain,
 arranged
 Her garden, sow'd her name and kept
 it green
 In living letters, told her fairy-tales,
 Show'd her the fairy footings on the
 grass,
 The little dells of cowslip, fairy palms,
 The petty marestail forest, fairy
 pines,
 Or from the tiny pitted target blew
 What look'd a flight of faery arrows
 aim'd
 All at one mark, all hitting : make-
 believes
 For Edith and himself : or else he
 forged,
 But that was later, boyish histories
 Of battle, bold adventure, dungeon,
 wreck,
 Flights, terrors, sudden rescues, and
 true love
 Crown'd after trial ; sketches rude
 and faint,
 But where a passion yet unborn per-
 haps
 Lay hidden as the music of the moon
 Sleeps in the plain eggs of the nightin-
 gale.
 And thus together, save for college-
 times
 Or Temple-eaten terms, a couple, fair
 As ever painter painted, poet sang,
 Or Heav'n in lavish bounty moulded,
 grew.
 And more and more, the maiden
 woman-grown,
 He wasted hours with Averill ; there,
 when first
 The tented winter-field was broken
 up
 Into that phalanx of the summer
 spears
 That soon should wear the garland ;
 there again
 When burr and bine were gather'd ;
 lastly there
 At Christmas ; ever welcome at the
 Hall,
 On whose dull sameness his full tide
 of youth
 Broke with a phosphorescence cheer-
 ing even
 My lady ; and the Baronet yet had
 laid
 No bar between them : dull and self-
 involved,
 Tall and erect, but bending from his
 height
 With half-allowing smiles for all the
 world,
 And mighty courteous in the main—
 his pride
 Lay deeper than to wear it as his
 ring—
 He, like an Aylmer in his Aylmerism,
 Would care no more for Leolin's
 walking with her
 Than for his old Newfoundland's,
 when they ran
 To loose him at the stables, for he
 rose
 Twofooted at the limit of his chain,
 Roaring to make a third : and how
 should Love,
 Whom the cross-lightnings of four
 chance-met eyes
 Flash into fiery life from nothing,
 follow
 Such dear familiarities of dawn ?
 Seldom, but when he does, Master of
 all.
 So these young hearts not knowing
 that they loved,
 Not she at least, nor conscious of a
 bar

Between them, nor by plight or broken ring
 Bound, but an immemorial intimacy,
 Wander'd at will, but oft accom-
 panied
 By Averill : his, a brother's love, that hung
 With wings of brooding shelter o'er her peace,
 Might have been other, save for Leolin's—
 Who knows ? but so they wander'd, hour by hour
 Gather'd the blossom that rebloom'd, and drank
 The magic cup that fill'd itself anew.

A whisper half reveal'd her to herself.
 For out beyond her lodges, where the brook
 Vocal, with here and there a silence, ran
 By sallowy rims, arose the labourers' homes,
 A frequent haunt of Edith, on low knolls
 That dimpling died into each other, huts
 At random scatter'd, each a nest in bloom.
 Her art, her hand, her counsel all had wrought
 About them : here was one that, summer-blanch'd,
 Was parcel-bearded with the traveller's joy
 In Autumn, parcel ivy-clad ; and here
 The warm blue breathings of a hidden hearth
 Broke from a bower of vine and honeysuckle :
 One look'd all rosetree, and another wore
 A close-set robe of jasmine sown with stars :
 This had a rosy sea of gillyflowers
 About it ; this, a milky-way on earth,
 Like visions in the Northern dreamer's heavens,
 A lily-avenue climbing to the doors ;
 One, almost to the martin-haunted eaves
 A summer burial deep in hollyhocks ;

Each, its own charm ; and Edith's everywhere ;
 And Edith ever visitant with him,
 He but less loved than Edith, of her poor :
 For she—so lowly-lovely and so loving,
 Quently responsive when the loyal hand
 Rose from the clay it work'd in as she past,
 Not sowing hedgerow texts and passing by,
 Nor dealing goodly counsel from a height
 That makes the lowest hate it, but a voice
 Of comfort and an open hand of help,
 A splendid presence flattering the poor roofs
 Revered as theirs, but kindlier than themselves
 To ailing wife or wailing infancy
 Or old bedridden palsy,—was adored ;
 He, loved for her and for himself. A grasp
 Having the warmth and muscle of the heart,
 A childly way with children, and a laugh
 Ringing like proven golden coinage true,
 Were no false passport to that easy realm,
 Where once with Leolin at her side the girl,
 Nursing a child, and turning to the warmth
 The tender pink five-beaded baby-soles,
 Heard the good mother softly whisper
 " Bless,
 God bless 'em : marriages are made in Heaven."

A flash of semi-jealousy clear'd it to her.
 My lady's Indian kinsman unannounced
 With half a score of swarthy faces came.
 His own, tho' keen and bold and soldierly,

Sear'd by the close ecliptic, was not fair;
 Fairer his talk, a tongue that ruled the hour,
 Tho' seeming boastful : so when first he dash'd
 Into the chronicle of a deedful day,
 Sir Aylmer half forgot his lazy smile
 Of patron " Good ! my lady's kinsman ! good ! "
 My lady with her fingers interlock'd,
 And rotatory thumbs on silken knees,
 Call'd all her vital spirits into each ear
 To listen : unawares they flitted off,
 Busying themselves about the flower-age
 That stood from out a stiff brocade in which,
 The meteor of a splendid season, she,
 Once with this kinsman, ah so long ago,
 Stept thro' the stately minuet of those days :
 But Edith's eager fancy hurried with him
 Snatch'd thro' the perilous passes of his life :
 Till Leolin ever watchful of her eye
 Hated him with a momentary hate.
 Wife-hunting, as the rumour ran, was he :
 I know not, for he spoke not, only shower'd
 His oriental gifts on everyone
 And most on Edith : like a storm he came,
 And shook the house, and like a storm he went.
 Among the gifts he left her (possibly
 He flow'd and ebb'd uncertain, to return
 When others had been tested) there was one,
 A dagger, in rich sheath with jewels on it
 Sprinkled about in gold that branch'd itself
 Fine as ice-ferns on January panes
 Made by a breath. I know not whence at first,
 Nor of what race, the work ; but as he told
 The story, storming a hill-fort of thieves
 He got it ; for their captain after fight,
 His comrades having fought their last below,
 Was climbing up the valley ; at whom he shot :
 Down from the beetling crag to which he clung
 Tumbled the tawny rascal at his feet,
 This dagger with him, which when now admired
 By Edith whom his pleasure was to please,
 At once the costly Sahib yielded to her.
 And Leolin, coming after he was gone,
 Tost over all her presents petulantly :
 And when she show'd the wealthy scabbard, saying
 " Look what a lovely piece of workmanship ! "
 Slight was his answer " Well—I care not for it : "
 Then playing with the blade he prick'd his hand,
 " A gracious gift to give a lady, this ! "
 " But would it be more gracious " ask'd the girl
 " Were I to give this gift of his to one
 That is no lady ? " " Gracious ? No " said he.
 " Me ?—but I cared not for it. O pardon me,
 I seem to be ungraciousness itself. "
 " Take it " she added sweetly " tho' his gift ;
 For I am more ungracious ev'n than you,
 I care not for it either ; " and he said
 Why then I love it : " but Sir Aylmer past,
 And neither loved nor liked the thing he heard.
 The next day came a neighbour,
 Blues and reds
 They talk'd of : blues were sure of it, he thought :
 Then of the latest fox—where started—kill'd

In such a bottom : " Peter had the
 brush,
 My Peter, first : " and did Sir Aylmer
 know
 That great pock-pitted fellow had
 been caught ?
 Then made his pleasure echo, hand to
 hand,
 And rolling as it were the substance of
 it
 Between his palms a moment up and
 down—
 " The birds were warm, the birds
 were warm upon him ;
 We have him now : " and had Sir
 Aylmer heard—
 Nay, but he must—the land was ring-
 ing of it—
 This blacksmith-border marriage—
 one they knew—
 Raw from the nursery—who could
 trust a child ?
 That cursed France with her egalities !
 And did Sir Aylmer (deferentially
 With nearing chair and lower'd accent)
 think—
 For people talk'd—that it was wholly
 wise
 To let that handsome fellow Averill
 walk
 So freely with his daughter ? people
 talk'd—
 The boy might get a notion into him ;
 The girl might be entangled ere she
 knew.
 Sir Aylmer Aylmer slowly stiffening
 spoke :
 " The girl and boy, Sir, know their
 differences ! "
 " Good " said his friend " but watch ! "
 and he " enough,
 More than enough, Sir ! I can guard
 my own."
 They parted, and Sir Aylmer Aylmer
 watch'd.

 Pale, for on her the thunders of the
 house
 Had fallen first, was Edith that same
 night ;
 Pale as the Jephtha's daughter, a
 rough piece
 Of early rigid colour, under which
 Withdrawing by the counter door to
 that
 Which Leolin open'd, she cast back
 upon him
 A piteous glance, and vanish'd. He,
 as one
 Caught in a burst of unexpected storm,
 And pelted with outrageous epithets,
 Turning beheld the Powers of the
 House
 On either side the hearth, indignant ;
 her,
 Cooling her false cheek with a feather-
 fan,
 Him glaring, by his own stale devil
 spurr'd,
 And, like a beast hard-ridden, breath-
 ing hard.
 " Ungenerous, dishonourable, base,
 Presumptuous ! trusted as he was
 with her,
 The sole succeder to their wealth,
 their lands,
 The last remaining pillar of their
 house,
 The one transmitter of their ancient
 name,
 Their child," " Our child ! " " Our
 heiress ! " " Ours ! " for still,
 Like echoes from beyond a hollow,
 came
 Her sicklier iteration. Last he said
 " Boy, mark me ! for your fortunes
 are to make.
 I swear you shall not make them out
 of mine.
 Now inasmuch as you have practised
 on her,
 Perplex her, made her half forget
 herself,
 Swerve from her duty to herself and
 us—
 Things in an Aylmer deem'd impos-
 sible,
 Far as we track ourselves—I say that
 this,—
 Else I withdraw favour and counten-
 ance
 From you and yours for ever—shall
 you do.
 Sir, when you see her—but you shall
 not see her—
 No, you shall write, and not to her,
 but me :

And you shall say that having spoken
 with me,
 And after look'd into yourself, you
 find
 That you meant nothing—as indeed
 you know
 That you meant nothing. Such a
 match as this !
 Impossible, prodigious ! " These
 were words,
 As meted by his measure of himself,
 Arguing boundless forbearance : after
 which,
 And Leolin's horror-stricken answer,
 " I
 So foul a traitor to myself and her,
 Never oh never," for about as long
 As the wind-hover hangs in balance,
 paused
 Sir Aylmer reddening from the storm
 within,
 Then broke all bonds of courtesy,
 and crying
 " Boy, should I find you by my doors
 again,
 My men shall lash you from them like
 a dog ;
 Hence ! " with a sudden execration
 drove
 The footstool from before him, and
 arose ;
 So, stammering " scoundrel " out of
 teeth that ground
 As in a dreadful dream, while Leolin
 still
 Retreated half-aghast, the fierce old
 man
 Follow'd, and under his own lintel
 stood
 Storming with lifted hands, a hoary
 face
 Meet for the reverence of the hearth,
 but now,
 Beneath a pale and unimpassion'd
 moon,
 Vext with unworthy madness, and
 deform'd.

Slowly and conscious of the rageful
 eye
 That watch'd him, till he heard the
 ponderous door
 Close, crashing with long echoes thro'
 the land,

Went Leolin ; then, his passions all in
 flood
 And masters of his motion, furiously
 Down thro' the bright lawns to his
 brother's ran,
 And foam'd away his heart at Averill's
 ear :
 Whom Averill solaced as he might,
 amazed :
 The man was his, had been his father's,
 friend :
 He must have seen, himself had seen
 it long ;
 He must have known, himself had
 known ; besides,
 He never yet had set his daughter
 forth
 Here in the woman-markets of the
 west,
 Where our Caucasians let themselves
 be sold.
 Some one, he thought, had slander'd
 Leolin to him.
 " Brother, for I have loved you more
 as son
 Than brother, let me tell you : I my-
 self—
 What is their pretty saying ? jilted,
 is it ?
 Jilted I was : I say it for your peace.
 Pain'd, and, as bearing in myself the
 shame
 The woman should have borne, humili-
 ated,
 I lived for years a stunted sunless
 life ;
 Till after our good parents past away
 Watching your growth, I seem'd
 again to grow.
 Leolin, I almost sin in envying you :
 The very whitest lamb in all my fold
 Loves you : I know her : the worst
 thought she has
 Is whiter even than her pretty hand :
 She must prove true : for, brother,
 where two fight
 The strongest wins, and truth and
 love are strength,
 And you are happy : let her parents
 be."

But Leolin cried out the more upon
 them—

Insolent, brainless, heartless ! heiress, To shame these mouldy Aylmers in
 wealth, their graves :
 Their wealth, their heiress ! wealth Chancellor, or what is greatest would
 enough was theirs he be—
 For twenty matches. Were he lord " O brother, I am grieved to learn
 of this, your grief—
 Why twenty boys and girls should Give me my fling, and let me say my
 marry on it, say."
 And forty blest ones bless him, and
 himself At which, like one that sees his own
 Be wealthy still, ay wealthier. He excess,
 believed And easily forgives it as his own.
 This filthy marriage-hindering Mam- He laugh'd ; and then was mute ;
 mon made but presently
 The harlot of the cities : nature crost Wept like a storm : and honest Averill
 Was mother of the foul adulteries seeing
 That saturate soul with body. Name, How low his brother's mood had fallen,
 too ! name, fetch'd
 Their ancient name ! they *might* His richest beeswing from a binn
 be proud ; its worth reserved
 Was being Edith's. Ah how pale For banquets, praised the waning red,
 she had look'd and told
 Darling, to-night ! they must have The vintage—when *this* Aylmer came
 rated her of age—
 Beyond all tolerance. These old Then drank and past it ; till at length
 pheasant-lords, the two,
 These partridge-breeders of a thou- Tho' Leolin flamed and fell again,
 sand years, agreed
 Who had mildew'd in their thousands, That much allowance must be made
 doing nothing for men.
 Since Egbert—why, the greater their After an angry dream this kindlier
 disgrace ! glow
 Fall back upon a name ! rest, rot in Faded with morning, but his purpose
 that ! held.
 Not *keep* it noble, make it nobler ?
 fools, Yet once by night again the lovers
 With such a vantage-ground for met,
 nobleness ! A perilous meeting under the tali
 He had known a man, a quintessence pines
 of man, That darken'd all the northward of her
 The life of all—who madly loved— Hall.
 and he, Him, to her meek and modest bosom
 Thwarted by one of these old father- prest
 fools, In agony, she promised that no force,
 Had rioted his life out, and made an Persuasion, no, nor death could alter
 end, her :
 He would not do it ! her sweet face He, passionately hopefuller, would
 and faith go,
 Held him from that : but he had Labour for his own Edith, and return
 powers, he knew it : In such a sunlight of prosperity
 Back would he to his studies, make a He should not be rejected. " Write
 name, to me !
 Name, fortune too : the world should They loved me, and because I love
 ring of him their child

They hate me : there is war between
 us, dear,
 Which breaks all bonds but ours ; we
 must remain
 Sacred to one another." So they
 talk'd,
 Poor children, for their comfort : the
 wind blew ;
 The rain of heaven, and their own
 bitter tears,
 Tears, and the careless rain of heaven,
 mixt
 Upon their faces, as they kiss'd each
 other
 In darkness, and above them roar'd
 the pine.

So Leolin went ; and as we task
 ourselves
 To learn a language known but
 smatteringly
 In phrases here and there at random,
 toil'd
 Mastering the lawless science of our
 law,
 That codeless myriad of precedent,
 That wilderness of single instances,
 Thro' which a few, by wit or fortune
 led,
 May beat a pathway out to wealth
 and fame.
 The jests, that flash'd about the
 pleader's room,
 Fightning of the hour, the pun, the
 scurilous tale,—
 Old scandals buried now seven decads
 deep
 In other scandals that have lived and
 died,
 And left the living scandal that shall
 die—
 Were dead to him already ; bent as
 he was
 To make disproof of scorn, and strong
 in hopes,
 And prodigal of all brain-labour he,
 Charier of sleep, and wine, and
 exercise,
 Except when for a breathing-while at
 eve,
 Some niggard fraction of an hour, he
 ran
 Beside the river-bank : and then in-
 deed

Harder the times were, and the hands
 of power
 Were bloodier, and the according
 hearts of men
 Seem'd harder too ; but the soft river-
 breeze,
 Which fann'd the gardens of that
 rival rose
 Yet fragrant in a heart remembering
 His former talks with Edith, on him
 breathed
 Far purelier in his rushings to and
 fro,
 After his books, to flush his blood
 with air,
 Then to his books again. My lady's
 cousin,
 Half-sickening of his pension'd after-
 noon,
 Drove in upon the student once or
 twice,
 Ran a Malayan muck against the
 times,
 Had golden hopes for France and all
 mankind,
 Answer'd all queries touching those
 at home
 With a heaved shoulder and a saucy
 smile,
 And fain had haled him out into the
 world,
 And air'd him there : his nearer
 friend would say
 "Screw not the chord too sharply lest
 it snap."
 Then left alone he pluck'd her dagger
 forth
 From where his worldless heart had
 kept it warm,
 Kissing his vows upon it like a knight.
 And wrinkled benchers often talk'd
 of him
 Approvingly, and prophesied his rise :
 For heart, I think, help'd head : her
 letters too,
 Tho' far between, and coming fitfully
 Like broken music, written as she
 found
 Or made occasion, being strictly
 watch'd,
 Charm'd him thro' every labyrinth
 till he saw
 An end, a hope, a light breaking upon
 him.

But they that cast her spirit into
 flesh,
 Her worldly-wise begetters, plagued
 themselves
 To sell her, those good parents, for her
 good.
 Whatever eldest-born of rank or
 wealth
 Might lie within their compass, him
 they lured
 Into their net made pleasant by the
 baits
 Of gold and beauty, wooing him to
 woo.
 So month by month the noise about
 their doors,
 And distant blaze of those dull ban-
 quets, made
 The nightly wirer of their innocent
 hare
 Falter before he took it. All in vain.
 Sullen, defiant, pitying, wrath, re-
 turn'd
 Leolin's rejected rivals from their
 suit
 So often, that the folly taking wings
 Slipt o'er those lazy limits down the
 wind
 With rumour, and became in other
 fields
 A mockery to the yeomen over ale,
 And laughter to their lords: but
 those at home,
 As hunters round a hunted creature
 draw
 The cordon close and closer toward
 the death,
 Narrow'd her goings out and comings
 in;
 Forbad her first the house of Averill,
 Then closed her access to the wealthier
 farms,
 Last from her own home-circle of the
 poor
 They barr'd her: yet she bore it: yet
 her cheek
 Kept colour: wondrous! but, O
 mystery!
 What amulet drew her down to that
 old oak,
 So old, that twenty years before, a
 part
 Falling had let appear the brand of
 John—

Once grovelike, each huge arm a tree,
 but now
 The broken base of a black tower, a
 cave
 Of touchwood, with a single flourish-
 ing spray.
 There the manorial lord too curiously
 Raking in that millennial touchwood-
 dust
 Found for himself a bitter treasure-
 trove;
 Burst his own wyvern on the seal, and
 read
 Writhing a letter from his child, for
 which
 Came at the moment Leolin's emis-
 sary,
 A crippled lad, and coming turn'd to
 fly,
 But scared with threats of jail and
 halter gave
 To him that fluster'd his poor parish
 wits
 The letter which he brought, and
 swore besides
 To play their go-between as heretofore
 Nor let them know themselves be-
 tray'd; and then
 Soul-stricken at their kindness to him,
 went
 Hating his own lean heart and miser-
 able.

Thenceforward oft from out a des-
 pot dream
 The father panting woke, and oft,
 as dawn
 Aroused the black republic on his
 elms,
 Sweeping the frothfly from the fescue
 brush'd
 Thro' the dim meadow toward his
 treasure-trove,
 Seized it, took home, and to my lady,
 —who made
 A downward crescent of her minion
 mouth,
 Listless in all despondence,—read;
 and tore,
 As if the living passion symbol'd
 there
 Were living nerves to feel the rent;
 and burnt,

Now chafing at his own great self With twenty months of silence,
 defied, slowly lost
 Now striking on huge stumbling- Nor greatly cared to lose, her hold
 blocks of scorn on life.
 In babyisms, and dear diminutives Last, some low fever ranging round to
 Scatter'd all over the vocabulary spy
 Of such a love as like a chidden child, The weakness of a people or a house,
 After much wailing, hush'd itself at Like flies that haunt a wound, or deer,
 last or men,
 Hopeless of answer : then tho' Averill Or almost all that is, hurting the
 wrote hurt—
 And bade him with good heart sustain Save Christ as we believe him—found
 himself—the girl
 All would be well—the lover heeded And flung her down upon a couch of
 not, fire,
 But passionately restless came and Where careless of the household faces
 went, near,
 And rustling once at night about the And crying upon the name of Leolin,
 place, She, and with her the race of Aylmer,
 There by a keeper shot at, slightly past.
 hurt,
 Raging return'd : nor was it well for Star to star vibrates light : may
 her soul to soul
 Kept to the garden now, and grove of Strike thro' a finer element of her
 pines, own ?
 Watch'd even there ; and one was set So,—from afar,—touch as at once ? or
 to watch why
 The watcher, and Sir Aylmer watch'd That night, that moment, when she
 them all, named his name,
 Yet bitterer from his readings : once Did the keen shriek " yes love, yes
 indeed, Edith, yes,"
 Warm'd with his wines, or taking Shrill, till the comrade of his chambers
 pride in her, woke,
 She look'd so sweet, he kiss'd her And came upon him half-arisen from
 tenderly sleep,
 Not knowing what possess'd him : With a weird bright eye, sweating
 that one kiss and trembling,
 Was Leolin's one strong rival upon His hair, as it were crackling into
 earth ; flames,
 Seconded, for my lady follow'd suit, His body half flung forward in pursuit,
 Seem'd hope's returning rose : and And his long arms stretch'd as to
 then ensued grasp a flyer :
 A Martin's summer of his faded Nor knew he wherefore he had made
 love, the cry ;
 Or ordeal by kindness ; after this And being much befooled and idioted
 He seldom crost his child without a By the rough amity of the other, sank
 sneer ; As into sleep again. The second day,
 The mother flow'd in shallower acrimo- My lady's Indian kinsman rushing in,
 nies : A breaker of the bitter news from
 Never one kindly smile, one kindly home,
 word : Found a dead man, a letter edged
 So that the gentle creature shut from with death
 all Beside him, and the dagger which
 Her charitable use, and face to face himself

Gave Edith, reddened with no bandit's blood :
 "From Edith" was engraven on the blade.

Then Averill went and gazed upon his death.
 And when he came again, his flock believed—
 Beholding how the years which are not Time's
 Had blasted him—that many thousand days
 Were clipt by horror from his term of life.
 Yet the sad mother, for the second death
 Scarce touch'd her thro' that nearness of the first,
 And being used to find her pastor texts,
 Sent to the harrow'd brother, praying him
 To speak before the people of her child,
 And fixt the Sabbath. Darkly that day rose :
 Autumn's mock sunshine of the faded woods
 Was all the life of it ; for hard on these,
 A breathless burden of low-folded heavens
 Stifled and chill'd at once : but every roof
 Sent out a listener : many too had known
 Edith among the hamlets round, and since
 The parents' harshness and the hapless loves
 And double death were widely murmured, left
 Their own gray tower, or plain-faced tabernacle,
 To hear him ; all in mourning these, and those
 With blots of it about them, ribbon, glove
 Or kerchief ; while the church,—one night, except
 For greenish glimmerings thro' the lancets,—made
 Still paler the pale head of him, who tower'd

Above them, with his hopes in either grave.

Long o'er his bent brows linger'd Averill,
 His face magnetic to the hand from which
 Livid he pluck'd it forth, and labour'd thro'
 His brief prayer-prelude, gave the verse "Behold,
 Your house is left unto you desolate!"
 But lapsed into so long a pause again
 As half amazed half frightened all his flock :
 Then from his height and loneliness of grief
 Bore down in flood ; and dash'd his angry heart
 Against the desolations of the world.

Never since our bad earth became one sea,
 Which rolling o'er the palaces of the proud,
 And all but those who knew the living God—
 Eight that were left to make a purer world—
 When since had flood, fire, earthquake, thunder, wrought
 Such waste and havock as the idolatries,
 Which from the low light of mortality
 Shot up their shadows to the Heaven of Heavens,
 And worshipt their own darkness as the Highest ?
 "Gash thyself, priest, and honour thy brute Baäl,
 And to thy worst self sacrifice thyself,
 For with thy worst self hast thou clothed thy God.
 Then came a Lord in no wise like to Baäl.
 The babe shall lead the lion. Surely now
 The wilderness shall blossom as the rose.
 Crown thyself, worm, and worship thine own lusts !—
 No coarse and blockish God of acreage

Stands at thy gate for thee to grovel
 to—
 Thy God is far diffused in noble groves
 And princely halls, and farms, and
 flowing lawns,
 And heaps of living gold that daily
 grow,
 And title-scrolls and gorgeous heral-
 dries.
 In such a shape dost thou behold thy
 God.
 Thou wilt not gash thy flesh for *him* ;
 for *thine*
 Fares richly, in fine linen, not a hair
 Ruffled upon the scarfskin, even while
 The deathless ruler of thy dying house
 Is wounded to the death that cannot
 die ;
 And tho' thou numberest with the
 followers
 Of One who cried 'leave all and
 follow me.'
 Thee therefore with His light about
 thy feet,
 Thee with His message ringing in
 thine ears,
 Thee shall thy brother man, the
 Lord from Heaven,
 Born of a village girl, carpenter's son,
 Wonderful, Prince of peace, the
 Mighty God,
 Count the more base idolater of the
 two ;
 Crueller : as not passing thro' the fire
 Bodies, but souls—thy children's—
 thro' the smoke,
 The blight of low desires—darkening
 thine own
 To thine own likeness ; or if one of
 these,
 Thy better born unhappily from thee,
 Should, as by miracle, grow straight
 and fair—
 Friends, I was bid to speak of such a
 one
 By those who most have cause to
 sorrow for her—
 Fairer than Rachel by the palmy well,
 Fairer than Ruth among the fields of
 corn,
 Fair as the Angel that said 'hail'
 she seem'd,
 Who entering fill'd the house with
 sudden light,
 For so mine own was brighten'd :
 where indeed
 The roof so lowly but that beam of
 Heaven
 Dawn'd sometime thro' the door-
 way ? whose the babe
 Too ragged to be fondled on her
 lap,
 Warm'd at her bosom ? The poor
 child of shame,
 The common care whom no one cared
 for, leapt
 To greet her, wasting his forgotten
 heart,
 As with the mother he had never
 known,
 In gambols ; for her fresh and inno-
 cent eyes
 Had such a star of morning in their
 blue,
 That all neglected places of the field
 Broke into nature's music when they
 saw her.
 Low was her voice, but won mysteri-
 ous way
 Thro' the seal'd ear to which a louder
 one
 Was all but silence—free of alms her
 hand—
 The hand that robed your cottage-
 walls with flowers
 Has often toil'd to clothe your little
 ones ;
 Has often placed upon the sick man's
 brow
 Cool'd it, or laid his feverous pillow
 smooth !
 Had you one sorrow and she shared it
 not ?
 One burthen and she would not
 lighten it ?
 One spiritual doubt she did not
 soothe ?
 Or when some heat of difference
 sparkled out,
 How sweetly would she glide between
 your wraths,
 And steal you from each other ! for
 she walk'd
 Wearing the light yoke of that Lord of
 love,
 Who still'd the rolling wave of Galilee !
 And one—of him I was not bid to
 speak—

Was always with her, whom you also knew.

Him too you loved, for he was worthy love.

And these had been together from the first ;

They might have been together till the last.

Friends, this frail bark of ours, when sorely tried,

May wreck itself without the pilot's guilt,

Without the captain's knowledge : hope with me.

Whose shame is that, if he went hence with shame ?

Nor mine the fault, if losing both of these

I cry to vacant chairs and widow'd walls,

' My house is left unto me desolate ' . "

While thus he spoke, his hearers wept ; but some,

Sons of the glebe, with other frowns than those

That knit themselves for summer shadow, scowl'd

At their great lord. He, when it seem'd he saw

No pale sheet-lightnings from afar, but fork'd

Of the near storm, and aiming at his head,

Sat anger-charm'd from sorrow, soldierlike,

Erect : but when the preacher's cadence flow'd

Softening thro' all the gentle attributes

Of his lost child, the wife, who watch'd his face,

Paled at a sudden twitch of his iron mouth ;

And " O pray God that he hold up " she thought

" Or surely I shall shame myself, and him. "

" Nor yours the blame—for who beside your hearths

Can take her place—if echoing me you cry

' Our house is left unto us desolate ? ' "

But thou, O thou that killest, had'st thou known,

O thou that stonest, had'st thou understood

The things belonging to thy peace and ours !

Is there no prophet but the voice that calls

Doom upon kings, or in the waste ' Repent ' ?

Is not our own child on the narrow way,

Who down to those that saunter in the broad

Cries ' come up hither, ' as a prophet to us ?

Is there no stoning save with flint and rock ?

Yes, as the dead we weep for testify—No desolation but by sword and fire ?

Yes, as your moanings witness, and myself

Am lonelier, darker, earthlier for my loss.

Give me your prayers, for he is past your prayers,

Not past the living fount of pity in Heaven.

But I that thought myself long-suffering, meek,

Exceeding ' poor in spirit '—how the words

Have twisted back upon themselves, and mean

Vileness, we are grown so proud—I wish'd my voice

A rushing tempest of the wrath of God

To blow these sacrifices thro' the world—

Sent like the twelve-divided concubine

To inflame the tribes : but there—out yonder—earth

Lightens from her own central Hell—O there

The red fruit of an old idolatry—The heads of chiefs and princes fall

so fast,

They cling together in the ghastly sack—

The land all shambles—naked marriages

Flash from the bridge, and ever-
murder'd France,
By shores that darken with the gath-
ering wolf,
Runs in a river of blood to the sick
sea.
Is this a time to madden madness
then ?
Was this a time for these to flaunt
their pride ?
May Pharaoh's darkness, folds as
dense as those
Which hid the Holiest from the
people's eyes
Ere the great death, shroud this great
sin from all !
Doubtless our narrow world must
canvass it :
O rather pray for those and pity them,
Who thro' their own desire accom-
plish'd bring
Their own gray hairs with sorrow to
the grave—
Who broke the bond which they
desired to break,
Which else had link'd their race with
times to come—
Who wove coarse webs to snare her
purity,
Grossly contriving their dear daugh-
ter's good—
Poor souls, and knew not what they
did, but sat
Ignorant, devising their own daugh-
ter's death !
May not that earthly chastisement
suffice ?
Have not our love and reverence left
them bare ?
Will not another take their heritage ?
Will there be children's laughter in
their hall
For ever and for ever, or one stone
Left on another, or is it a light thing
That I their guest, their host, their
ancient friend,
I made by these the last of all my
race
Must cry to these the last of theirs, as
cried
Christ ere His agony to those that
swore
Not by the temple but the gold, and
made

Their own traditions God, and slew
the Lord,
And left their memories a world's
curse—' Behold,
Your house is left unto you deso-
late ? ' "

Ended he had not, but she brook'd
no more :
Long since her heart had beat re-
morselessly,
Her cramped-up sorrow pain'd her,
and a sense
Of meanness in her unresisting life,
Then their eyes vexed her ; for on
entering
He had cast the curtains of their seat
aside—
Black velvet of the costliest—she her-
self
Had seen to that : fain had she closed
them now,
Yet dared not stir to do it, only near'd
Her husband inch by inch, but when
she laid,
Wifelike, her hand in one of his, he
veil'd
His face with the other, and at once,
as falls
A creeper when the prop is broken, fell
The woman shrieking at his feet,
and swoon'd.
Then her own people bore along the
nave
Her pendent hands, and narrow
meagre face
Seam'd with the shallow cares of
fifty years :
And her the Lord of all the landscape
round
Ev'n to its last horizon, and of all
Who peer'd at him so keenly, follow'd
out
Tall and erect, but in the middle aisle
Reel'd, as a footsore ox in crowded
ways
Stumbling across the market to his
death,
Unpitied ; for he groped as blind, and
seem'd
Always about to fall, grasping the
pews
And oaken finials till he touch'd the
door ;

Yet to the lychgate, where his chariot stood,
 Strode from the porch, tall and erect again.

The slow-worm creeps, and the thin weasel there
 Follows the mouse, and all is open field.

But nevermore did either pass the gate
 Save under pall with bearers. In one month,

Thro' weary and yet ever wearier hours,

The childless mother went to seek her child ;

And when he felt the silence of his house

About him, and the change and not the change,

And those fixt eyes of painted ancestors

Staring for ever from their gilded walls

On him their last descendant, his own head

Began to droop, to fall ; the man became

Imbecile ; his one word was " desolate " ;

Dead for two years before his death was he ;

But when the second Christmas came, escaped

His keepers, and the silence which he felt,

To find a deeper in the narrow gloom

By wife and child ; nor wanted at his end

The dark retinue reverencing death

At golden thresholds ; nor from tender hearts,

And those who sorrow'd o'er a vanish'd race,

Pity, the violet on the tyrant's grave.

Then the great Hall was wholly broken down,

And the broad woodland parcell'd into farms ;

And where the two contrived their daughter's good,

Lies the hawk's cast, the mole has made his run,

The hedgehog underneath the plan-tain bores,

The rabbit fondles his own harmless face,

SEA DREAMS

A city clerk, but gently born and bred ;

His wife, an unknown artist's orphan child—

One babe was theirs, a Margaret, three years old :

They, thinking that her clear german-der eye

Droopt in the giant-factored city-gloom,

Came, with a month's leave given them, to the sea :

For which his gains were dock'd, however small :

Small were his gains, and hard his work ; besides,

Their slender household fortunes (for the man

Had risk'd his little) like the little thrift,

Trembled in perilous places o'er a deep :

And oft, when sitting all alone, his face

Would darken, as he cursed his credulousness,

And that one unctuous mouth which lured him, rogue,

To buy strange shares in some Peruvian mine.

Now seaward-bound for health they gain'd a coast,

All sand and cliff and deep-inrunning cave,

At close of day ; slept, woke, and went the next,

The Sabbath, pious variers from the church,

To chapel ; where a heated pulpiteer,

Not preaching simple Christ to simple men,

Announced the coming doom, and fulminated

Against the scarlet woman and her creed :

For sideways up he swung his arms, Touching, upjetted in spirits of wild
 and shriek'd sea-smoke,
 " Thus, thus with violence," ev'n as And scaled in sheets of wasteful foam,
 if he held and fell
 The Apocalyptic millstone, and him- In vast sea-cataracts—ever and
 self anon
 Were that great Angel ; " Thus with Dead claps of thunder from within
 violence the cliffs
 Shall Babylon be cast into the sea ; Heard thro' the living roar. At this
 Then comes the close." The gentle- the babe,
 hearted wife Their Margaret cradled near them,
 Sat shuddering at the ruin of a world ; wail'd and woke
 He at his own : but when the wordy The mother, and the father suddenly
 storm cried,
 Had ended, forth they came and " A wreck, a wreck ! " then turn'd,
 paced the shore, and groaning said,
 Ran in and out the long sea-framing
 caves, " Forgive ! How many will say,
 Drank the large air, and saw, but ' forgive,' and find
 scarce believed A sort of absolution in the sound
 (The sootflake of so many a summer To hate a little longer ! No ; the sin
 still That neither God nor man can well
 Clung to their fancies) that they saw, forgive,
 the sea. Hypocrisy, I saw it in him at once.
 So now on sand they walk'd, and now Is it so true that second thoughts are
 on cliff, best ?
 Lingering about the thymy promon- Not first, and third, which are a riper
 tories, first ?
 Till all the sails were darken'd in the Too ripe, too late ! they come too late
 west, for use.
 And rosed in the east : then homeward Ah love, there surely lives in man
 and to bed : and beast
 Where she, who kept a tender Chris- Something divine to warn them of
 tian hope their foes :
 Haunting a holy text, and still to that And such a sense, when first I fronted
 Returning, as the bird returns, at him,
 night, Said, ' trust him not ; ' but after,
 " Let not the sun go down upon your when I came
 wrath," To know him more, I lost it, knew him
 Said, " Love, forgive him : " but he less ;
 did not speak ; Fought with what seem'd my own
 And silenced by that silence lay the uncharity ;
 wife, Sat at his table ; drank his costly
 Remembering her dear Lord who died wines ;
 for all, Made more and more allowance for
 And musing on the little lives of men, his talk ;
 And how they mar this little by their Went further, fool ! and trusted him
 feuds. with all,
 All my poor scrapings from a dozen
 years
 But while the two were sleeping, a Of dust and deskwork : there is no
 full tide such mine,
 Rose with ground-swell, which, on None ; but a gulf of ruin, swallowing
 the foremost rocks gold,

Not making. Ruin'd! ruin'd! the
 sea roars
 Ruin: a fearful night!"

"Not fearful; fair,"
 Said the good wife, "if every star in
 heaven
 Can make it fair: you do but hear
 the tide.
 Had you ill dreams?"

"O yes," he said, "I dream'd
 Of such a tide swelling toward the
 land,
 And I from out the boundless outer
 deep
 Swept with it to the shore, and enter'd
 one
 Of those dark caves that run beneath
 the cliffs.
 I thought the motion of the boundless
 deep
 Bore through the cave, and I was
 heaved upon it
 In darkness: then I saw one lovely
 star
 Larger and larger. 'What a world,'
 I thought,
 'To live in!' but in moving on I
 found
 Only the landward exit of the cave,
 Bright with the sun upon the stream
 beyond:
 And near the light a giant woman sat,
 All over earthy, like a piece of earth,
 A pickaxe in her hand: then out I
 slipt
 Into a land all sun and blossom, trees
 As high as heaven, and every bird
 that sings:
 And here the night-light flickering in
 my eyes
 Awoke me."

"That was then your dream,"
 she said,
 "Not sad, but sweet."

"So sweet, I lay," said he,
 "And mused upon it, drifting up the
 stream
 In fancy, till I slept again, and
 pieced

The broken vision; for I dream'd
 that still
 The motion of the great deep bore
 me on,
 And that the woman walk'd upon
 the brink:
 I wonder'd at her strength, and ask'd
 her of it:
 'It came,' she said, 'by working in
 the mines.'
 O then to ask her of my shares, I
 thought;
 And ask'd; but not a word; she shook
 her head.
 And then the motion of the current
 ceased,
 And there was rolling thunder; and we
 reach'd
 A mountain, like a wall of burs and
 thorns;
 But she with her strong feet up the
 steep hill
 Trod out a path: I follow'd; and at
 top
 She pointed seaward: there a fleet of
 glass,
 That seem'd a fleet of jewels under me,
 Sailing along before a gloomy cloud
 That not one moment ceased to thun-
 der, past
 In sunshine: right across its track
 there lay,
 Down in the water, a long reef of gold,
 Or what seem'd gold: and I was glad
 at first
 To think that in our often-ransack'd
 world
 Still so much gold was left; and then
 I fear'd
 Lest the gay navy there should splin-
 ter on it,
 And fearing waved my arm to warn
 them off;
 An idle signal, for the brittle fleet
 (I thought I could have died to save
 it) near'd,
 Touch'd, clink'd, and clash'd, and
 vanish'd, and I woke
 I heard the clash so clearly. Now I see
 My dream was Life; the woman
 honest Work;
 And my poor venture but a fleet of
 glass
 Wreck'd on a reef of visionary gold."

"Nay," said the kindly wife to comfort him,
 "You raised your arm, you tumbled down and broke
 The glass with little Margaret's medicine in it;
 And, breaking that, you made and broke your dream:
 A trifle makes a dream, a trifle breaks."
 "No trifle," groan'd the husband;
 "yesterday
 I met him suddenly in the street, and ask'd
 That which I ask'd the woman in my dream.
 Like her, he shook his head. 'Show me the books!'
 He dodged me with a long and loose account.
 'The books, the books!' but he, he could not wait,
 Bound on a matter he of life and death;
 When the great Books (see Daniel seven and ten)
 Were open'd, I should find he meant me well;
 And then began to bloat himself, and ooze
 All over with the fat affectionate smile
 That makes the widow lean. 'My dearest friend,
 Have faith, have faith! We live by faith,' said he;
 'And all things work together for the good
 Of those'—it makes me sick to quote him—last
 Gript my hand hard, and with God-bless-you went.
 I stood like one that had received a blow:
 I found a hard friend in his loose accounts,
 A loose one in the hard grip of his hand,
 A curse in his God-bless-you: then my eyes
 Pursued him down the street, and far away,
 Among the honest shoulders of the crowd,
 Read rascal in the motions of his back.

And scoundrel in the supple-sliding knee."
 "Was he so bound, poor soul?" said the good wife;
 "So are we all: but do not call him, love,
 Before you prove him, rogue, and proved, forgive.
 His gain is loss; for he that wrongs his friend
 Wrongs himself more, and ever bears about
 A silent court of justice in his breast,
 Himself the judge and jury, and himself
 The prisoner at the bar, ever condemn'd:
 And that drags down his life: then comes what comes
 Hereafter: and he meant, he said he meant,
 Perhaps he meant, or partly meant, you well."
 "'With all his conscience and one eye askew'—
 Love, let me quote these lines, that you may learn
 A man is likewise counsel for himself,
 Too often, in that silent court of yours—
 'With all his conscience and one eye askew,
 So false, he partly took himself for true;
 Whose pious talk, when most his heart was dry,
 Made wet the crafty crowsfoot round his eye;
 Who, never naming God except for gain,
 So never took that useful name in vain;
 Made Him his catspaw and the Cross his tool,
 And Christ the bait to trap his dupe and fool;
 Nor deeds of gift, but gifts of grace he forged,
 And snakelike slimed his victim ere he gorged;
 And oft at Bible meetings, o'er the rest

Arising, did his holy oily best,
 Dropping the too rough H in Hell
 and Heaven,
 To spread the Word by which himself
 had thriven.
 How like you this old satire? "

"Nay," she said,
 "I loathe it: he had never kindly
 heart,
 Nor ever cared to better his own
 kind,
 Who first wrote satire, with no pity
 in it.
 But will you hear *my* dream, for I had
 one
 That altogether went to music? Still
 It awed me."

Then she told it, having dream'd
 Of that same coast.

—But round the North, a light,
 A belt, it seem'd, of luminous vapour,
 lay,
 And ever in it a low musical note
 Swell'd up and died; and, as it
 swell'd, a ridge
 Of breaker issued from the belt, and
 still
 Grew with the growing note, and
 when the note
 Had reach'd a thunderous fullness,
 on those cliffs
 Broke, mixt with awful light (the
 same as that
 Living within the belt) whereby she
 saw
 That all those haes on cliffs were cliffs
 no more,
 But huge cathedral fronts of every
 age,
 Grave, florid, stern, as far as eye
 could see,
 One after one: and then the great
 ridge drew,
 Lessening to the lessening music,
 back,
 And past into the belt and swell'd
 again
 Slowly to music: ever when it
 broke
 The statues, king or saint, or founder
 fell;

Then from the gaps and chasms of
 ruin left
 Came men and women in dark
 clusters round,
 Some crying, "Set them up! they
 shall not fall!"
 And others "Let them lie, for they
 have fall'n."
 And still they strove and wrangled:
 and she grieved
 In her strange dream, she knew not
 why, to find
 Their wildest wailings never out of
 tune
 With that sweet note; and ever as
 their shrieks
 Ran highest up the gamut, that
 great wave
 Returning, while none mark'd it,
 on the crowd
 Broke, mixt with awful light, and
 show'd their eyes
 Glaring, and passionate looks, and
 swept away
 The men of flesh and blood, and men
 of stone.
 To the waste deeps together.

"Then I fixt
 My wistful eyes on two fair images,
 Both crown'd with stars and high
 among the stars,—
 The Virgin Mother standing with her
 child
 High up on one of those dark min-
 ster-fronts—
 Till she began to totter, and the child
 Clung to the mother, and sent out a
 cry
 Which mixt with little Margaret's,
 and I woke,
 And my dream awed me:—well—
 but what are dreams?
 Yours came but from the breaking
 of a glass,
 And mine but from the crying of a
 child."

"Child? No!" said he, 'but
 this tide's roar, and his,
 Our Boanerges with his threats of
 doom,
 And loud-lung'd Antibabylonianisms
 (Altho' I grant but little music there)

Went both to make your dream : but
if there were

A music harmonizing our wild cries,
Sphere-music such as that you dream'd
about,

Why, that would make our passions
far too like

The discords dear to the musician.
No—

One shriek of hate would jar all the
hymns of heaven :

True Devils with no ear, they howl in
tune

With nothing but the Devil ! ”

“ ‘ True ’ indeed !

One of our town, but later by an
hour

Here than ourselves, spoke with me
on the shore ;

While you were running down the
sands, and made

The dimpled flounce of the sea-
furbelow flap,

Good man, to please the child. She
brought strange news.

Why were you silent when I spoke
to-night ?

I had set my heart on your forgiving
him

Before you knew. We *must* forgive
the dead.”

“ Dead ! who is dead ? ”

“ The man your eye pursued.
A little after you had parted with
him,

He suddenly dropt dead of heart-
disease.”

“ Dead ? he ? of heart-disease ?
what heart had he
To die of ? dead ! ”

“ Ah, dearest, if there be
A devil in man, there is an angel too,
And if he did that wrong you charge
him with,

His angel broke his heart. But your
rough voice

(You spoke so loud) has roused the
child again.

Sleep, little birdie, sleep ! will she not
sleep

Without her ‘ little birdie ? ’ well
then, sleep,

And I will sing you ‘ birdie.’ ”

Saying this,
The woman half turn'd round from
him she loved,

Left him one hand, and reaching
thro' the night

Her other, found (for it was close
beside)

And half embraced the basket cradle-
head

With one soft arm, which, like the
pliant bough

That moving moves the nest and
nestling, sway'd

The cradle, while she sang this baby
song.

What does little birdie say
In her nest at peep of day ?
Let me fly, says little birdie,
Mother, let me fly away.
Birdie, rest a little longer,
Till the little wings are stronger.
So she rests a little longer,
Then she flies away.

What does little baby say,
In her bed at peep of day ?
Baby says, like little birdie,
Let me rise and fly away.
Baby, sleep a little longer,
Till the little limbs are stronger.
If she sleeps a little longer,
Baby too shall fly away.

“ She sleeps : let us too, let all evil,
sleep.

He also sleeps—another sleep than
ours.

He can do no more wrong : forgive
him, dear,

And I shall sleep the sounder ! ”

Then the man,
“ His deeds yet live, the worst is yet
to come.

Yet let your sleep for this one night
be sound :

I do forgive him ! ”

"Thanks, my love," she said,
 "Your own will be the sweeter," and
 they slept.

THE GRANDMOTHER

I

AND Willy, my eldest-born, is gone,
 you say, little Anne?
 Ruddy and white, and strong on his
 legs, he looks like a man.
 And Willy's wife has written: she
 never was overwise,
 Never the wife for Willy: he
 wouldn't take my advice.

For, Annie, you see, her father was
 not the man to save,
 Hadn't a head to manage, and drank
 himself into his grave.
 Pretty enough, very pretty! but I
 was against it for one.
 Eh!—but he wouldn't hear me—and
 Willy, you say, is gone.

Willy, my beauty, my eldest-born,
 the flower of the flock;
 Never a man could fling him: for
 Willy stood like a rock.
 "Here's a leg for a babe of a week!"
 says doctor; and he would be
 bound,
 There was not his like that year in
 twenty parishes round.

Strong of his hands, and strong on
 his legs, but still of his tongue!
 I ought to have gone before him:
 I wonder he went so young.
 I cannot cry for him, Annie: I have
 not long to stay;
 Perhaps I shall see him the sooner,
 for he lived far away.

Why do you look at me, Annie?
 you think I am hard and cold;

But all my children have gone before
 me, I am so old:
 I cannot weep for Willy, nor can I
 weep for the rest;
 Only at your age, Annie, I could have
 wept with the best.

For I remember a quarrel I had with
 your father, my dear,
 All for a slanderous story, that cost
 me many a tear.
 I mean your grandfather, Annie:
 it cost me a world of woe,
 Seventy years ago, my darling,
 seventy years ago.

For Jenny, my cousin, had come to
 the place, and I knew right well
 That Jenny had tript in her time:
 I knew, but I would not tell.
 And she to be coming and slandering
 me, the base little liar!
 But the tongue is a fire as you know,
 my dear, the tongue is a fire.

And the parson made it his text that
 week, and he said likewise,
 That a lie which is half a truth is
 ever the blackest of lies,
 That a lie which is all a lie may be
 met and fought with outright,
 But a lie which is part a truth is a
 harder matter to fight.

IX

And Willy had not been down to the
 farm for a week and a day;
 And all things look'd half-dead, tho'
 it was the middle of May.
 Jenny, to slander me, who knew what
 Jenny had been!
 But soiling another, Annie, will never
 make oneself clean.

And I cried myself well-nigh blind,
 and all of an evening late

I climb'd to the top of the garth,
and stood by the road at the
gate.

The moon like a rick on fire was rising
over the dale.

And whit, whit, whit, in the bush
beside me chirrup the nightin-
gale.

XI

All of a sudden he stopt : there past
by the gate of the farm,

Willy,— he didn't see me,— and
Jenny hung on his arm.

Out into the road I started, and spoke ;
I scarce knew how ;

Ah, there's no fool like the old one—
it makes me angry now.

XII

Willy stood up like a man, and look'd
the thing that he meant ;

Jenny, the viper, made me a mocking
courtsey and went.

And I said, " Let us part : in a
hundred years it'll all be the
same,

You cannot love me at all, if you love
not my good name."

XIII

And he turn'd, and I saw his eyes all
wet, in the sweet moonshine :

" Sweetheart, I love you so well that
your good name is mine.

And what do I care for Jane, let her
speak of you well or ill ;

But marry me out of hand : we two
shall be happy still."

XIV

" Marry you, Willy ! " said I, " but
I needs must speak my mind,

And I fear you'll listen to tales, be
jealous and hard and unkind."

But he turn'd and claspt me in his
arms, and answer'd, " No, love,
no ; "

Seventy years ago, my darling, seventy
years ago.

xv

So Willy and I were wedded : I
wore a lilac gown ;

And the ringers rang with a will,
and he gave the ringers a crown.

But the first that ever I bare was
dead before he was born,

Shadow and shine is life, little Annie,
flower and thorn.

xvi

That was the first time, too, that ever
I thought of death.

There lay the sweet little body that
never had drawn a breath.

I had not wept, little Anne, not since
I had been a wife ;

But I wept like a child that day, for
the babe had fought for his life.

xvii

His dear little face was troubled, as
if with anger or pain :

I look'd at the still little body—his
trouble had all been in vain.

For Willy I cannot weep, I shall see
him another morn :

But I wept like a child for the child
that was dead before he was
born.

xix

But I wish'd it had been God's will
that I, too, then could have
died :

I began to be tired a little, and fain
had slept at his side.

And that was ten years back, or
more, if I don't forget :

But as to the children, Annie, they're
all about me yet.

XX

Pattering over the boards, my Annie
 who left me at two,
 Patter she goes, my own little Annie,
 an Annie like you :
 Pattering over the boards, she comes
 and goes at her will,
 While Harry is in the five-acre and
 Charlie ploughing the hill.

XXV

And age is a time of peace, so it be
 free from pain,
 And happy has been my life ; but I
 would not live it again.
 I seem to be tired a little, that's all,
 and long for rest ;
 Only at your age, Annie, I could
 have wept with the best.

XXI

And Harry and Charlie, I hear them
 too—they sing to their team :
 Often they come to the door in a
 pleasant kind of a dream.
 They come and sit by my chair, they
 hover about my bed—
 I am not always certain if they be
 alive or dead.

So Willy has gone, my beauty, my
 eldest-born, my flower ;
 But how can I weep for Willy, he
 has but gone for an hour,—
 Gone for a minute, my son, from this
 room into the next ;
 I, too, shall go in a minute. What
 time have I to be vexed ?

XXII

And yet I know for a truth, there's
 none of them left alive ;
 For Harry went at sixty, your father
 at sixty-five :
 And Willy, my eldest born, at nigh
 threescore and ten ;
 I knew them all as babies, and now
 they're elderley men.

And Willy's wife has written, she
 never was overwise.
 Get me my glasses, Annie : thank God
 that I keep my eyes.
 There is but a trifle left you, when
 I shall have past away.
 But stay with the old woman now :
 you cannot have long to stay.

For mine is a time of peace, it is not
 often I grieve ;
 I am oftener sitting at home in my
 father's farm at eve :
 And the neighbours come and laugh
 and gossip, and so do I ;
 I find myself often laughing at things
 that have long gone by.

NORTHERN FARMER

OLD STYLE

I

To be sure the preacher says, our
 sins should make us sad :
 But mine is a time of peace, and there
 is Grace to be had ;
 And God, not man, is the Judge of us
 all when life shall cease ;
 And in this Book, little Annie, the
 message is one of Peace.

WHEER 'asta beän saw long and meä
 liggín' 'ere aloän ?
 Noorse ? thoort nowt o' a noorse :
 whoy, Doctor's abeän an' agoän :
 Says that I moänt 'a naw moor yaäle :
 but I beänt a fool :
 Git ma my yaäle, for I beänt a-gooín'
 to bræk my rule.

Doctors, they knaws nowt, for a
 says what's nawways true :
 Naw soort o' koind o' use to saây the
 things that a do.

NORTHERN FARMER, OLD STYLE

I've 'ed my point o' yaäle ivry noight " The Amoighty's a taäkin' o' you to
 sin' I beän 'ere, 'issén, my friend," says 'eä.
 An' I've 'ed my quart ivry market- I weänt saäy men be loiars, thof
 noight for foorty year. summun said it in 'aäste.
 But a reäds wonn sarmin weeäk, an'
 I 'a stubb'd Thornaby waäste.

Parson's a beän loikewise, an' a
 sittin 'ere o' my bed.
 " The Amoighty's a taäkin' o' you to
 'issén, my friend," a said,
 An' a towld ma my sins, an's toithe
 were duc, an' I gied it in hond ;
 I done my duty by un, as I a' done
 by the lond.

Larn'd a ma' beä. I reckons I 'an-
 not sa mooch to larn.
 But a cost oop, thot a did, 'boot
 Bessy Marris's barn.
 Thof a knaws I hallus voätet wi'
 Squoire an' choorch an' staäte,
 An' i' the woost o' toimes I wur niver
 agin the raäte.

An' I hallus comed to 's choorch afoor
 moy Sally wur deäd,
 An' 'eerd un a bummin' awaäy loike
 a buzzard-clock¹ ower my yeäd,
 An' I niver knaw'd whot a meän'd
 but I thowt a 'ad summut to
 saäy,
 An I thowt a said whot a owt to 'a
 said an' I comed awaäy.

VI

Bessy Marris's barn ! tha knaws she
 laäid it to meä.
 Mowt 'a beän, mayhap, for she wur
 a bad un, sheä.
 'Siver, I kep un, I kep un, my lass
 tha mun understand ;
 I done my duty by un as I 'a done by
 the lond.

VII

But Parson a comes an' a goos, an
 a says it eäsy an freeä

¹ Cockchafer.

VIII

D'ya moind the waäste, my lass ?
 naw, naw, tha was not born
 then ;
 Theer wur a boggle in it, I often 'eerd
 un mysen ;
 Moäst loike a butter-bump,² for I
 'eerd un aboot an' aboot,
 But I stubb'd un oop wi' the lot, an'
 raäved an rembled un oot.

Keäper's it wur ; fo' they fun un
 theer a-laäid on 'is faäce
 Doon i' the woild 'emies³ afoor I
 comed to the plaäce.
 Noäks or Thimbleby—toner 'ed shot
 un as deäd as a naäil.
 Noäks wur 'ang'd for it oop at 'soize
 —but git ma my yaäle.

Dubbut looäk at the waäste : theer
 warn't not feäd for a cow ;
 Nowt at all but bracken an' fuzz, an'
 looäk at it now—
 Warnt worth nowt a haäcre, an' now
 theer's lots o' feäd,
 Fourscore yows upon it an' some on
 it doon in seäd.

Nobbut a bit on it's left, an' I meän'd
 to 'a stubb'd it at fall,
 Done it ta-year I meän'd, an' runn'd
 plow thruff it an' all,
 If godamoighty an' parson 'ud nob-
 but let ma aloän,
 Meä, wi' haäte oondered haäcre o'
 Squoire's, an lond o' my oän.

XII

Do godamoighty knaw what a's doing
 a-taäkin' o' meä ?

² Blütern.

³ Anemones.

I beānt wonn as saws 'ere a beān an' Doctor's a 'tottler, lass, an a's hallus
 yonder a peā! i' the owd taale;
 An' Squoire 'ull be sa mad an' all— I weānt breāk rules for Doctor, a
 a' dear a' dear! knaws naw moor nor a floy;
 And I 'a monaged for Squoire come Git ma my yaāle I tell tha, an' gin I
 Michaelmas thirty year. mun doy I mun doy.

XIII

A mowt 'a taāken Joānes, as 'ant a
 'aāpoth o' sense,
 Or a mowt 'a taāken Robins—a niver
 mended a fence:
 But godamoighty a moost taāke meā
 an' taāke ma now
 Wi 'auf the cows to cauve an'
 Thornaby holms to plow!

Looāk 'ow quoloty smoiles when they
 sees ma a passin' by,
 Says to thessén naw doot " what a
 mon a beā sewer-ly!"
 For they knaws what I beān to
 Squoire sin fust a comed to the
 'All;
 I done my duty by Squoire an' I
 done my duty by all.

Squoire's in Lunnon, an' summun
 I reckons 'ull 'a to wroite,
 For who's to howd the lond ater meā
 thot muddles ma quoit;
 Sartin-sewer I beā, thot a weānt niver
 give it to Joānes,
 Noither a moānt to Robins—a niver
 rembles the stoāns.

XVI

But summun 'll come ater meā may-
 hap wi' 'is kittle o' steām
 Huzzin' an' maāzin the blessed feālds
 wi' the Divil's oān teām.
 Gin I mun doy I mun doy, an' loife
 they says is sweet,
 But gin I mun doy I mun doy, for I
 couldn abear to see it.

XVII

What attā stannin' theer for, an'
 doesn bring ma the yaāle?

TITHONUS

THE woods decay, the woods decay
 and fall,
 The vapours weep their burthen to
 the ground,
 Man comes and tills the field and
 lies beneath,
 And after many a summer dies the
 swan.
 Me only cruel immortality
 Consumes: I wither slowly in thine
 arms,
 Here at the quiet limit of the world,
 A white-hair'd shadow roaming like
 a dream
 The ever silent spaces of the East,
 Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls
 of morn.

Alas! for this gray shadow, once a
 man—
 So glorious in his beauty and thy
 choice,
 Who madest him thy chosen, that
 he seem'd
 To his great heart none other than a
 God!
 I ask'd thee, " Give me immortality."
 Then didst thou grant mine asking
 with a smile,
 Like wealthy men who care not how
 they give.
 But thy strong Hours indignant
 work'd their wills,
 And beat me down and marr'd and
 wasted me,
 And tho' they could not end me, left
 me maim'd
 To dwell in presence of immortal
 youth,
 Immortal age beside immortal youth,
 And all I was, in ashes. Can thy love,
 Thy beauty, make amends, tho'
 even now,

Close over us, the silver star, thy
guide,
Shines in those tremulous eyes that
fill with tears
To hear me? Let me go: take back
thy gift:
Why should a man desire in any way
To vary from the kindly race of men,
Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance
Where all should pause, as is most
meet for all?

A soft air fans the cloud apart;
there comes
A glimpse of that dark world where I
was born.
Once more the old mysterious glim-
mer steals
From thy pure brows, and from thy
shoulders pure,
And bosom beating with a heart
renew'd.
Thy cheek begins to redden thro'
the gloom,
Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close
to mine,
Ere yet they blind the stars, and the
wild team
Which love thee, yearning for thy
yoke, arise,
And shake the darkness from their
loosen'd manes,
And beat the twilight into flakes of
fire.

Lo! ever thus thou growest beauti-
ful
In silence, then before thine answer
given
Departest, and thy tears are on my
cheek,

Why wilt thou ever scare me with
thy tears,
And make me tremble lest a saying
learnt,
In days far-off, on that dark earth,
be true?
"The Gods themselves cannot recall
their gifts."

Ay me! ay me! with what another
heart
In days far-off, and with what other
eyes
I used to watch—if I be he that
watch'd—
The lucid outline forming round
thee; saw
The dim curls kindle into sunny rings;
Changed with thy mystic change, and
felt my blood
Glow with the glow that slowly
crimson'd all
Thy presence and thy portals, while
I lay,
Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing
dewy-warm
With kisses balmier than half-open-
ing buds
Of April, and could hear the lips
that kiss'd
Whispering I knew not what of
wild and sweet,
Like that strange song I heard Apollo
sing,
While Ilion like a mist rose into towers.

Yet hold me not for ever in thine
East:
How can my nature longer mix with
thine?
Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me,
cold
Are all thy lights, and cold my
wrinkled feet
Upon thy glimmering thresholds,
when the steam
Floats up from those dim fields about
the homes
Of happy men that have the power to
die,
And grassy barrows of the happier
dead.
Release me, and restore me to the
ground;
Thou seest all things, thou wilt see
my grave:
Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by
morn;
I earth in earth forget these empty
courts,
And thee returning on thy silver
wheels.

THE VOYAGE

We left behind the painted buoy
That tosses at the harbour-mouth ;
And madly danced our hearts with
joy,
As fast we fled to the South :
How fresh was every sight and sound
On open main or winding shore !
We knew the merry world was round,
And we might sail for evermore.

Warm broke the breeze against the
brow,
Dry sang the tackle, sang the
sail :
The Lady's-head upon the prow
Caught the shrill salt, and sheer'd
the gale.
The broad seas swell'd to meet the
keel,
And swept behind : so quick the
run,
We felt the good ship shake and
reel,
We seem'd to sail into the Sun !

How oft we saw the Sun retire,
And burn the threshold of the
night,
Fall from his Ocean-lane of fire,
And sleep beneath his pillar'd
light !
How oft the purple-skirted robe
Of twilight slowly downward drawn,
As thro' the slumber of the globe
Again we dash'd into the dawn !

IV

New stars all night above the brim
Of waters lighten'd into view ;
They climb'd as quickly, for the rim
Changed every moment as we flew.
Far ran the naked moon across
The houseless ocean's heaving field,
Or flying shone, the silver boss
Of her own halo's dusky shield ;

The peaky islet shifted shapes,
High towns on hills were dimly
seen,
We past long lines of Northern capes
And dewy Northern meadows
green.
We came to warmer waves, and deep
Across the boundless east we
drove,
Where those long swells of breaker
sweep
The nutmeg rocks and isles of
clove.

VI

By peaks that flamed, or, all in shade,
Gloom'd the low coast and quiver-
ing brine
With ashy rains, that spreading made
Fantastic plume or sable pine ;
By sands and steaming flats, and
floods
Of mighty mouth, we scudded
fast,
And hills and scarlet-mingled woods
Glow'd for a moment as we past.

VII

O hundred shores of happy climes,
How swiftly stream'd ye by the
bark !
At times the whole sea burn'd, at
times
With wakes of fire we tore the
dark ;
At times a carven craft would shoot
From havens hid in fairy bowers,
With naked limbs and flowers and
fruit,
But we nor paused for fruit nor
flowers.

For one fair Vision ever fled
Down the waste waters day and
night,
And still we follow'd where she led,
In hope to gain upon her flight.
Her face was evermore unseen,
And fixt upon the far sea-line ;

But each man murmur'd "O my Queen,
I follow till I make thee mine."

And now we lost her, now she gleam'd
Like Fancy made of golden air,
Now nearer to the prow she seem'd
Like Virtue firm, like Knowledge fair,
Now high on waves that idly burst
Like Heavenly Hope she crown'd the sea,
And now, the bloodless point reversed,
She bore the blade of Liberty.

And only one among us—him
We pleased not—he was seldom pleased :
He saw not far : his eyes were dim :
But ours he swore were all discased,
"A ship of fools" he shrieked in spite,
"A ship of fools" he sneer'd and wept.
And overboard one stormy night
He cast his body, and on we swept.

And never sail of ours was furl'd,
Nor anchor dropt at eve or morn ;
We loved the glories of the world,
But laws of nature were our scorn ;
For blasts would rise and rave and cease,
But whence were those that drove the sail
Across the whirlwind's heart of peace,
And to and thro' the counter-gale ?

Again to colder climes we came,
For still we follow'd where she led :
Now mate is blind and captain lame,
And half the crew are sick or dead.
But blind or lame or sick or sound
We follow that which flies before :
We know the merry world is round,
And we may sail for evermore.

ALL along the valley, stream that
flashes white,
Deepening thy voice with the deep-
ening of the night,
All along the valley, where thy
waters flow,
I walk'd with one I loved two and
thirty years ago.
All along the valley while I walk'd
to-day,
The two and thirty years were a mist
that rolls away ;
For all along the valley, down thy
rocky bed
Thy living voice to me was as the
voice of the dead,
And all along the valley, by rock and
cave and tree,
The voice of the dead was a living
voice to me.

THE FLOWER

ONCE in a golden hour
I cast to earth a seed.
Up there came a flower,
The people said, a weed.
To and fro they went
Thro' my garden-bower,
And muttering discontent
Cursed me and my flower.
Then it grew so tall
It wore a crown of light,
But thieves from o'er the wall
Stole the seed by night.
Sow'd it far and wide
By every town and tower,
Till all the people cried
"Splendid is the flower."
Read my little fable :
He that runs may read.
Most can raise the flowers now,
For all have got the seed.
And some are pretty enough,
And some are poor indeed ;
And now again the people
Call it but a weed.

REQUIESCAT

FAIR is her cottage in its place,
Where yon broad water sweetly
slowly glides.
It sees itself from thatch to base
Dream in the sliding tides.

And fairer she, but ah how soon to
die !
Her quiet dream of life this hour
may cease.
Her peaceful being slowly passes by
To some more perfect peace.

THE SAILOR BOY

He rose at dawn and, fired with hope,
Shot o'er the seething harbour-bar,
And reach'd the ship and caught the
rope,
And whistled to the morning star.

And while he whistled long and
loud
He heard a fierce mermaid cry,
"O boy, tho' thou art young and
proud,
I see the place where thou wilt
lie.

"The sands and yeasty surges mix
In caves about the dreary bay,
And on thy ribs the limpet sticks,
And in thy heart the scrawl shall
play."

"Fool," he answer'd, "death is sure
To those that stay and those that
roam,
But I will nevermore endure
To sit with empty hands at home.

"My mother clings about my neck,
My sisters crying 'stay for shame ;'
My father raves of death and wreck,
They are all to blame, they are all
to blame.

"God help me ! save I take my part
Of danger on the roaring sea,
A devil rises in my heart,
Far worse than any death to me."

THE ISLET

"WHITHER O whither love shall we
go,
For a score of sweet little summers or
so ?"

The sweet little wife of the singer said,
On the day that follow'd the day she
was wed,
Whither O whither love shall we
go ?"

And the singer shaking his curly head
Turn'd as he sat, and struck the keys
There at his right with a sudden crash,
Singing, "and shall it be over the seas
With a crew that is neither rude nor
rash,

But a bevy of Eroses apple-cheek'd,
In a shallop of crystal ivory-beak'd,
With a satin sail of a ruby glow,
To a sweet little Eden on earth that I
know,

A mountain islet pointed and peak'd ;
Waves on a diamond shingle dash,
Cataract brooks to the ocean run,
Fairly-delicate palaces shine
Mixt with myrtle and clad with vine,
And overstream'd and silvery-streak'd
With many a rivulet high against the
Sun

The facets of the glorious mountain
flash
Above the valleys of palm and pine."

"Thither O thither, love, let us go,"

"No, no, no !
For in all that exquisite isle, my dear,
There is but one bird with a musical
throat,
And his compass is but of a single note,
That it makes one weary to hear."

"Mock me not ! mock me not !
love, let us go."

"No, love, no.
For the bud ever breaks into bloom
on the tree,
And a storm never wakes on the lonely
sea,
And a worm is there in the lonely
wood,
That pierces the liver and blackens
the blood,
And makes it a sorrow to be."

THE RINGLET

I

"Your ringlets, your ringlets,
That look so golden-gay,
If you will give me one, but one,
To kiss it night and day,
Then never chilling touch of Time
Will turn it silver-gray;
And then shall I know it is all true
gold
To flame and sparkle and stream as
of old,
Till all the comets in heaven are cold,
And all her stars decay."
"Then take it, love, and put it by;
This cannot change, nor yet can I."

"My ringlet, my ringlet,
That art so golden-gay,
Now never chilling touch of Time
Can turn thee silver-gray;
And a lad may wink, and a girl may
hint,
And a fool may say his say;
For my doubts and fears were all
amiss,
And I swear henceforth by this and
this,
That a doubt will only come for a kiss,
And a fear to be kiss'd away."
"Then kiss it, love, and put it by;
If this can change, why so can I."

II

O Ringlet, O Ringlet,
I kiss'd you night and day,
And Ringlet, O Ringlet,
You still are golden-gay,
But Ringlet, O Ringlet,
You should be silver-gray;
For what is this which now I'm told,
I that took you for true gold,
She that gave you's bought and sold,
Sold, sold.

II

O Ringlet, O Ringlet,
She blush'd a rosy red,
When Ringlet, O Ringlet,
She clipt you from her head,
And Ringlet, O Ringlet,
She gave you me, and said,

Come, kiss it, love, and put it by;
If this can change, why so can I."
O fie, you golden nothing, fie
You golden lie.

O Ringlet, O Ringlet,
I count you much to blame,
For Ringlet, O Ringlet,
You put me much to shame,
So Ringlet, O Ringlet,
I doom you to the flame.
For what is this which now I learn,
Has given all my faith a turn?
Burn, you glossy heretic, burn,
Burn, burn.

A WELCOME TO ALEXANDRA

March 7, 1863.

SEA-KINGS' daughter from over the
sea,

Alexandra!
Saxon and Norman and Dane are we,
But all of us Danes in our welcome
of thee,

Alexandra!
Welcome her, thunders of fort and of
fleet!

Welcome her, thundering cheer of
the street!

Welcome her, all things youthful and
sweet,

Scatter the blossom under her feet!
Break, happy land, into earlier
flowers!

Make music, O bird, in the new-
budded bowers!

Blazon your mottos of blessing and
prayer!

Welcome her, welcome her, all that is
ours!

Warble, O bugle, and trumpet, blare!
Flags, flutter out upon turrets and
towers!

Flames, on the windy headland flare!
Utter your jubilee, steeple and spire!
Clash, ye bells, in the merry March
air!

Flash, ye cities, in rivers of fire!
Rush to the roof, sudden rocket, and
higher

Melt into stars for the land's desire !
 Roll and rejoice, jubilant voice,
 Roll as a ground-swell dash'd on the
 strand,
 Roar as the sea when he welcomes the
 land,
 And welcome her, welcome the land's
 desire,
 The sea-kings' daughter as happy as
 fair,
 Blissful bride of a blissful heir,
 Bride of the heir of the kings of the
 sea—
 O joy to the people and joy to the
 throne,
 Come to us, love us and make us your
 own :
 For Saxon or Dane or Norman we,
 Teuton or Celt, or whatever we be,
 We are each all Dane in our welcome
 of thee,

Alexandra !

A DEDICATION

DEAR, near and true—no truer Time
 himself

Can prove you, tho' he make you
 evermore
 Dearer and nearer, as the rapid of life
 Shoots to the fall—take this and
 pray that he,
 Who wrote it, honouring your sweet
 faith in him,
 May trust himself; and spite of
 praise and scorn,
 As one who feels the immeasurable
 world,
 Attain the wise indifference of the
 wise ;
 And after Autumn past—if left to
 pass
 His autumn into seeming-leafless
 days—
 Draw toward the long frost and
 longest night,
 Wearing his wisdom lightly, like the
 fruit
 Which in our winter woodland looks a
 flower.¹

¹ The fruit of the Spindle-tree (*Euonymus
 Europæus*).

EXPERIMENTS

BOADICEA

WHILE about the shore of Mona
 those Neronian legionaries
 Burnt and broke the grove and altar
 of the Druid and Druidess,
 Far in the East Boādicéa, standing
 loftily charioted,
 Mad and maddening all that heard
 her in her fierce volubility,
 Girt by half the tribes of Britain, near
 the colony Cāmulođúne,
 Yell'd and shriek'd between her
 daughters o'er a wild confed-
 eracy.

"They that scorn the tribes and
 call us Britain's barbarous popu-
 laces,

Did they hear me, would they listen,
 did they pity me supplicating ?
 Shall I heed them in their anguish ?
 shall I brook to be supplicated ?
 Hear Icenian, Catiuchlanian, hear
 Coritanian, Trinobant !

Must their ever-ravening eagle's
 beak and talon annihilate us ?
 Tear the noble heart of Britain, leave
 it gorily quivering ?
 Bark an answer, Britain's raven !
 bark and blacken innumerable,
 Blacken round the Roman carrion,
 make the carcase a skeleton,
 Kite and kestrel, wolf and wolfkin,
 from the wilderness, wallow in it,
 Till the face of Bel be brighten'd
 Taranis be propitiated.
 Lo their colony half-defended ! lo
 their colony, Cāmulođúne !
 There the horde of Roman robbers
 mock at a barbarous adversary.
 There the hive of Roman liars wor-
 ship a gluttonous emperor-idiot.
 Such is Rome, and this her deity :
 hear it, Spirit of Cássivêlaun !

"Hear it, Gods ! the Gods have
 heard it, O Icenian, O Coritanian !
 Doubt not ye the Gods have answer'd,
 Catiuchlanian, Trinobant.

These have told us all their anger
in miraculous utterances,
Thunder, a flying fire in heaven, a
murmur heard aerially,
Phantom sound of blows descending,
moan of an enemy massacred,
Phantom wail of women and children,
multitudinous agonies.

Bloodily flow'd the Tamesa rolling
phantom bodies of horses and
men ;

Then a phantom colony smoulder'd
on the refluxing estuary ;

Lastly yonder yester-even, suddenly
giddily tottering—

There was one who watch'd and
told me—down their statue of
Victory fell.

Lo their precious Roman bantling, lo
the colony C  mulod  ne,

Shall we teach it a Roman lesson ?
shall we care to be pitiful ?

Shall we deal with it as an infant ?
shall we dandle it amorously ?

“ Hear Icenian, Catiuchlanian,
hear Coritanian, Trinobant !

While I roved about the forest, long
and bitterly meditating,

There I heard them in the darkness,
at the mystical ceremony,

Loosely robed in flying raiment, sang
the terrible prophetesses.

‘ Fear not, isle of blowing woodland,
isle of silvery parapets !

Tho’ the Roman eagle shadow thee,
tho’ the gathering enemy narrow
thee,

Thou shalt wax and he shall dwindle,
thou shalt be the mighty one
yet !

Thine the liberty, thine the glory,
thine the deeds to be celebrated,

Thine the myriad-rolling ocean, light
and shadow illimitable,

Thine the lands of lasting summer,
many-blossoming Par  dises,

Thine the North and thine the South
and thine the battle-thunder of
God.’

So they chanted : how shall Britain
be upon auguries happier ?

‘ Chanted in the darkness, and
cometh a victory now.

“ Hear Icenian, Catiuchlanian,
hear Coritanian, Trinobant !

Me the wife of rich Prasutagus, me
the lover of liberty,

Me they seized and me they tortured,
me they lash’d and humiliated,

Me the sport of ribald Veterans, mine
of ruffian violators !

See they sit, they hide their faces,
miserable in ignominy !

Wherefore in me burns an anger,
not by blood to be satiated.

Lo the palaces and the temple, lo
the colony C  mulod  ne !

There they ruled, and thence they
wasted all the flourishing terri-
tory,

Thither at their will they haled the
yellow-ringed Britoness—

Bloodily, bloodily fall the battle-axe,
unexhausted, inexorable,

Shout Icenian, Catiuchlanian, shout
Coritanian, Trinobant,

Till the victim hear within and yearn
to hurry precipitously

Like the leaf in a roaring whirlwind,
like the smoke in a hurricane
whirl’d.

Lo the colony, there they rioted in the
city of C  nobeline !

There they drank in cups of emerald,
there at tables of ebony lay,

Rolling on their purple couches in
their tender effeminacy.

There they dwelt and there they
rioted ; there—there—they dwell
no more.

Burst the gates, and burn the palaces,
break the works of the statuary,

Take the hoary Roman head and
shatter it, hold it abominable,

Cut the Roman boy to pieces in his
lust and voluptuousness,

Lash the maiden into swooning, me
they lash’d and humiliated,

Chop the breasts from off the mother,
dash the brains of the little one
out,

Up my Britons, on my chariot, on
my chargers, trample them under
us.”

So the Queen Bo  dice  , standing
loftily charioted,

Brandishing in her hand a dart and
 rolling glances lioness-like,
 Yell'd and shrieked between her
 daughters in her fierce volubility.
 Till her people all around the royal
 chariot agitated,
 Madly dash'd the darts together,
 writhing barbarous lineaments,
 Made the noise of frosty woodlands,
 when they shiver in January,
 Roar'd as when the rolling breakers
 boom and blanch on the precipices,
 Yell'd as when the winds of winter
 tear an oak on a promontory.
 So the silent colony hearing her
 tumultuous adversaries
 Clash the darts and on the buckler
 beat with rapid unanimous
 hand,
 Thought on all her evil tyrannies, all
 her pitiless avarice,
 Till she felt the heart within her fall
 and flutter tremulously,
 Then her pulses at the clamouring of
 her enemy fainted away.
 Out of evil evil flourishes, out of
 tyranny tyranny buds,
 Ran the land with Roman slaughter,
 multitudinous agonies,
 Perish'd many a maid and matron,
 many a valourous legionary.
 Fell the colony, city, and citadel,
 London, Verulam, C  mulod  ne.

Rings to the roar of an angel
 onset—
 Me rather all that bowery loneli-
 ness,
 The brooks of Eden mazily murmur-
 ing,
 And bloom profuse and cedar
 arches
 Charm, as a wanderer out in
 ocean,
 Where some refulgent sunset of
 India
 Streams o'er a rich ambrosial ocean
 isle,
 And crimson-hued the stately
 palmwoods
 Whisper in odorous heights of
 even.

Heptasyllabics

O you chorus of indolent reviewers,
 Irresponsible, indolent reviewers,
 Look, I come to the test, a tiny
 poem
 All composed in a metre of Catullus,
 All in quantity, careful of my motion,
 Like the skater on ice that hardly
 bears him,
 Lest I fall unawares before the people,
 Waking laughter in indolent review-
 ers.
 Should I flounder awhile without a
 tumble
 Thro' this metrification of Catullus,
 They should speak to me not without
 a welcome,
 All that chorus of indolent reviewers.
 Hard, hard, hard is it, only not to
 tumble,
 So fantastical is the dainty metre.
 Wherefore slight me not wholly, nor
 believe me
 Too presumptuous, indolent review-
 ers.
 O blatant Magazines, regard me
 rather—
 Since I blush to belaud myself a
 moment—
 As some rare little rose, a piece of
 inmost
 Horticultural art, or half coquette-
 like
 Maiden, not to be greeted unbenignly.

IN QUANTITY

MILTON

Alcaics

O MIGHTY-MOUTH'D inventor of har-
 monies,
 O skill'd to sing of Time or Eter-
 nity,
 God-gifted organ-voice of England,
 Milton, a name to resound for
 ages;
 Whose Titan angels, Gabriel, Abdiel,
 Starr'd from Jehovah's gorgeous
 armouries,
 Tower, as the deep-domed empy-
 rean

SPECIMEN OF A TRANSLATION OF THE
ILIAD IN BLANK VERSE

So Hector said, and sea-like roar'd
 his host ;
 Then loosed their sweating horses
 from the yoke,
 And each beside his chariot bound his
 own ;
 And oxen from the city, and goodly
 sheep
 In haste they drove, and honey-
 hearted wine
 And bread from out the houses
 brought, and heap'd
 Their firewood, and the winds from
 off the plain
 Roll'd the rich vapour far into the
 heaven.
 And these all night upon the
 bridge¹ of war
 Sat glorying ; many a fire before
 them blazed :
 As when in heaven the stars about
 the moon

¹ Or, ridge

Look beautiful, when all the winds
 are laid,
 And every height comes out, and
 jutting peak
 And valley, and the immeasurable
 heavens
 Break open to their highest, and all
 the stars
 Shine, and the Shepherd gladdens in
 his heart :
 So many a fire between the ships
 and stream
 Of Xanthus blazed before the towers
 of Troy,
 A thousand on the plain ; and close by
 each
 Sat fifty in the blaze of burning fire ;
 And champing golden grain, the
 horses stood
 Hard by their chariots, waiting for
 the dawn.²

Iliad 8. 542-561.² Or more literally—And eating hoary grain and pulse the steeds
 Stood by their cars, waiting the throned morn.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

TIMBUCTOO

Deep in that lion-haunted inland lies
A mystick city, goal of high emprise.

CHAPMAN.

I stood upon the Mountain which
o'erlooks
The narrow seas, whose rapid interval
Parts Afric from green Europe, when
the Sun
Had fall'n below th' Atlantick, and
above
The silent Heavens were blench'd
with faery light,
Uncertain whether faery light or
cloud,
Flowing Southward, and the chasms
of deep, deep blue
Slumber'd unfathomable, and the
stars
Were flooded over with clear glory
and pale.
I gaz'd upon the sheeny coast beyond,
There where the Giant of old Time
infix'd
The limits of his prowess, pillars high
Long time eras'd from Earth: even
as the Sea
When weary of wild inroad buildeth
up
Huge mounds whereby to stay his
yeasty waves.
And much I mus'd on legends quaint
and old
Which whilome won the hearts of all
on Earth
Toward their brightness, ev'n as
flame draws air;
But had their being in the heart of
Man
As air is th' life of flame: and thou
wert then
A center'd glory-circled Memory,
Divinest Atalantis, whom the waves
Have buried deep, and thou of later
name

Imperial Eldorado roof'd with gold:
Shadows to which, despite all shocks
of Change,

All on-set of capricious Accident,
Men clung with yearning Hope which
would not die.

As when in some great City where the
walls

Shake, and the streets with ghastly
faces throng'd

Do utter forth a subterranean voice,
Among the inner columns far retir'd
At midnight, in the lone Acropolis,
Before the awful Genius of the
place

Kneels the pale Priestess in deep
faith, the while

Above her head the weak lamp dips
and winks

Unto the fearful summoning without:
Nathless she ever clasps the marble
knees,

Bathes the cold hand with tears, and
gazeth on

Those eyes which wear no light but
that wherewith

Her phantasy informs them.

Where are ye
Thrones of the Western wave, fair
Islands green?

Where are your moonlight halls, your
cedarn glooms,

The blossoming abysses of your hills?
Your flowering Capes, and your gold-
sanded bays

Blown round with happy airs of
odorous winds?

Where are the infinite ways, which,
Seraph-trod,

Wound thro' your great Elysian
solitudes,

Whose lowest deeps were, as with
visible love,

Fill'd with Divine effulgence, circum-
 fus'd,
 Flowing between the clear and
 polish'd stems,
 And ever circling round their emer-
 ald cones
 In coronals and glories, such as gird
 The unfading foreheads of the Saints
 in Heaven?
 For nothing visible, they say, had
 birth
 In that blest ground but it was play'd
 about
 With it's peculiar glory. Then I
 rais'd
 My voice and cried, "Wide Afric,
 doth thy Sun
 Lighten, thy hills enfold a City as
 fair
 As those which starr'd the night o'
 the elder World?
 Or is the rumour of thy Timbuctoo
 A dream as frail as those of ancient
 Time?"

A curve of whitening, flashing,
 ebbing light!
 A rustling of white wings! the
 bright descent
 Of a young Seraph! and he stood
 beside me
 There on the ridge, and look'd into
 my face
 With his unutterable, shining orbs.
 So that with hasty motion I did veil
 My vision with both hands, and saw
 before me
 Such colour'd spots as dance athwart
 the eyes
 Of those, that gaze upon the noonday
 Sun.
 Girt with a Zone of flashing gold
 beneath
 His breast, and compass'd round
 about his brow
 With triple arch of ever-changing
 bows,
 And circled with the glory of living
 light
 And alternation of all hues, he stood.

"O child of man, why muse you
 here alone

Upon the Mountain, on the dreams
 of old
 Which fill'd the Earth with passing
 loveliness,
 Which flung strange music on the
 howling winds,
 And odours rapt from remote Para-
 dise?
 Thy sense is clogg'd with dull mor-
 tality,
 Thy spirit fetter'd with the bond of
 clay:
 Open thine eyes and see."

I look'd, but not
 Upon his face, for it was wonderful
 With it's exceeding brightness, and
 the light
 Of the great Angel Mind which look'd
 from out
 The starry glowing of his restless
 eyes.
 I felt my soul grow mighty, and my
 Spirit
 With supernatural excitation bound
 Within me, and my mental eye grew
 large
 With such a vast circumference of
 thought,
 That in my vanity I seem'd to stand
 Upon the outward verge and bound
 alone
 Of full beatitude. Each failing sense
 As with a momentary flash of light
 Grew thrillingly distinct and keen.
 I saw
 The smallest grain that dappled the
 dark Earth,
 The indistinct atom in deep air,
 The Moon's white cities, and the
 opal width
 Of her small glowing lakes, her silver
 heights
 Unvisited with dew of vagrant cloud,
 And the unsounded, undescended
 depth
 Of her black hollows. The clear
 Galaxy
 Shorn of it's hoary lustre, wonderful,
 Distinct and vivid with sharp points
 of light,
 Blaze within blaze, an unimagined
 depth
 And harmony of planet-girded Suns

And moon-encircled planets, wheel in wheel,
 Arch'd the wan Sapphire. Nay—the hum of men,
 Or other things talking in unknown tongues,
 And notes of busy life in distant worlds
 Beat like a far wave on my anxious ear,

A maze of piercing, trackless, thrilling thoughts,
 Involving and embracing each with each,
 Rapid as fire, inextricably link'd,
 Expanding momentarily with every sight
 And sound which struck the palpitating sense,
 The issue of strong impulse, hurried through
 The riv'n rapt brain; as when in some large lake
 From pressure of descendant crags, which lapse
 Disjointed, crumbling from their parent slope
 At slender interval, the level calm
 Is ridg'd with restless and increasing spheres
 Which break upon each other, each th' effect
 Of separate impulse, but more fleet and strong
 Than it's precursor, till the eye in vain
 Amid the wild unrest of swimming shade
 Dappled with hollow and alternate rise
 Of interpenetrated arc, would scan
 Definite round.

I know not if I shape
 These things with accurate similitude
 From visible objects, for but dimly now,
 Less vivid than a half-forgotten dream,
 The memory of that mental excellence
 Comes o'er me, and it may be I entwine
 The indecision of my present mind

With it's past clearness, yet it seems to me
 As even then the torrent of quick thought
 Absorbed me from the nature of itself
 With it's own fleetness. Where is he that borne
 Adown the sloping of an arrowy stream,
 Could link his shallop to the fleeting edge,
 And muse midway with philosophic calm
 Upon the wondrous laws, which regulate
 The fierceness of the bounding Element?

My thoughts which long have grovell'd in the slime
 Of this dull world, like dusky worms which house
 Beneath unshaken waters, but at once
 Upon some Earth-awakening day of Spring
 Do pass from gloom to glory, and aloft
 Winnow the purple, bearing on both sides
 Double display of starlit wings which burn,
 Fanlike and fibred, with intensest bloom;
 Ev'n so my thoughts, evewhile so low, now felt
 Unutterable buoyancy and strength
 To bear them upward through the trackless fields
 Of undefin'd existence far and free.

Then first within the South me-thought I saw
 A wilderness of spires, and chrystal pile
 Of rampart upon rampart, dome on dome,
 Illimitable range of battlement
 On battlement, and the Imperial height
 Of Canopy o'ercanopied.

Behind
 In diamond light upsprung the dazzling cones

Of Pyramids as far surpassing | And step by step to scale that mighty
 Earth's | stair
 As Heaven than Earth is fairer. Whose landing-place is wrapt about
 Each aloft with clouds
 Upon his narrow'd Eminence bore Of glory of Heaven.¹ With earliest
 globes light of Spring,
 Of wheeling Suns, or Stars, or And in the glow of fallow Summer-
 semblances tide,
 Of either, showering circular abyss And in red Autumn when the winds
 Of radiance. But the glory of the are wild
 place With gambols, and when full-voiced
 Stood out a pillar'd front of burnish'd Winter roofs
 gold, The headland with inviolate white
 Intermixably high, if gold it were, snow,
 Or metal more etheriel, and beneath I play about his heart a thousand
 Two doors of blinding brilliance, ways,
 where no gaze Visit his eyes with visions, and his
 Might rest, stood open, and the eye ears
 could scan, With harmonies of wind and wave
 Through length of porch and valve and wood,
 and boundless hall, —Of winds which tell of waters,
 Part of a throne of fiery flame, and of waters
 wherefrom Betraying the close kisses of the
 The snowy skirting of a garment wind—
 hung, And win him unto me: and few there
 And glimpse of multitudes of multi- be
 tudes So gross of heart who have not felt
 That minister'd around it—if I saw and known
 These things distinctly, for my A higher than they see: They with
 human brain dim eyes
 Stagger'd beneath the vision, and Behold me darkling. Lo! I have
 thick night given *thee*
 Came down upon my eyelids, and I To understand my presence, and to
 fell feel

With ministering hand he raised
 me up:
 Then with a mournful and ineffable
 smile,
 Which but to look on for a moment
 fill'd
 My eyes with irresistible sweet tears,
 In accents of majestic melody,
 Like a swoln river's gushings in still
 night
 Mingled with floating music, thus he
 spake:

"There is no mightier Spirit than
 I to sway
 The heart of man: and teach him to
 attain
 By shadowing forth the Unattainable;

¹ Be ye perfect even as your Father in Heaven is perfect.

Reacheth to every corner under
Heaven,

Deep-rooted in the living soil of truth ;
So that men's hopes and fears take
refuge in

The fragrance of it's complicated
glooms,

And cool impleached twilights. Child
of Man,

See'st thou yon river, whose trans-
lucent wave,

Forth issuing from the darkness,
windeth through

The argent streets o' th' City, imaging
The soft inversion of her tremulous

Domes,
Her gardens frequent with the stately

Palm,
Her Pagods hung with music of sweet

bells,
Her obelisks of ranged Chrysolite,

Minarets and towers? Lo! how he
passeth by,

And gulphs himself in sands, as not
enduring

To carry through the world those
waves, which bore

The reflex of my City in their depths.
Oh City! oh latest Throne! where I

was rais'd
To be a mystery of loveliness

Unto all eyes, the time is well-nigh
come

When I must render up this glorious
home

To keen *Discovery*: soon yon brilli-
ant towers

Shall darken with the waving of her
wand ;

Darken, and shrink and shiver into
huts,

Black specks amid a waste of dreary
sand,

Low-built, mud-wall'd, Barbarian
settlements.

How chang'd from this fair City! "

Thus far the Spirit :

Then parted Heaven-ward on the
wing : and I

Was left alone on Calpe, and the
Moon

Had fallen from the night, and all
was dark !

1829.

THE SKIPPING-ROPE

SURE never yet was Antelope

Could skip so lightly by.

Stand off, or else my skipping-rope

Will hit you in the eye.

How lightly whirls the skipping-rope !

How fairy-like you fly !

Go, get you gone, you muse and
mope—

I hate that silly sigh.

Nay, dearest, teach me how to hope,

Or tell me how to die.

There, take it, take my skipping-rope,

And hang yourself thereby.

Poems, 1842.

AFTER-THOUGHT

Ah, God! the petty fools of rhyme,
That shriek and sweat in pigmy
wars

Before the stony face of Time,

And look'd at by the silent stars ;—

That hate each other for a song,

And do their little best to bite,

That pinch their brothers in the

throng,

And scratch the very dead for

spite,—

And strain to make an inch of room

For their sweet selves, and cannot

hear

The sullen Lethe rolling doom

On them and theirs, and all things

here ;

When one small touch of Charity

Could lift them nearer Godlike

State,

Than if the crowded Orb should cry

Like those that cried Diana great ;

And I too talk, and lose the touch

I talk of. Surely, after all,

The noblest answer unto such

Is kindly silence when they brawl.

Punch, March 7, 1846. **ALCIBIADES.**

THE THIRD OF FEBRUARY, 1852.

My Lords, we heard you speak : you
told us all

That England's honest censure
went too far ;

That our free press should cease to
brawl,

Not sting the fiery Frenchman into
war.

It was our ancient privilege, my
Lords,

To fling whate'er we felt, not fearing,
into words.

We love not this French God, the
child of Hell,

Wild War, who breaks the con-
verse of the wise ;

But though we love kind Peace so
well,

We dare not ev'n by silence sanction
lies.

It might be safe our censures to with-
draw ;

And yet, my Lords, not well : there
is a higher law.

As long as we remain, we must speak
free,

Tho' all the storm of Europe on us
break ;

No little German state are we,

But the one voice in Europe : we
must speak ;

That if to-night our greatness were
struck dead,

There might be left some record of
the things we said.

If you be fearful, then must we be
bold.

Our Britain cannot salve a tyrant
o'er,

Better the waste Atlantic roll'd

On her and us and our's for ever-
more,

What I have we fought for Freedom
for our prime,

At last to dodge and palter with a
public crime ?

Shall we fear *him* ? our own we never
fear'd.

From our first Charles by force
we wrung our claims.

Prick'd by the Papal spur, we rear'd,
We flung the burthen of the second
James.

I say, we *never* fear'd ! and as for
these,

We broke them on the land, we drove
them on the seas.

And you, my Lords, you make the
people muse

In doubt if you be of our Barons'
breed—

Were those your sires who fought at
Lewes ?

Is this the manly strain of Runny-
mede ?

O fall'n nobility, that, overawed,
Would lisp in honey'd whispers of
this monstrous fraud !

We feel, at least, that silence here
were sin,

Not our's the fault if we have feeble
hosts—

If easy patrons of their kin

Have left the last free race with
naked coasts !

They knew the precious things they
had to guard :

For us, we will not spare the tyrant
one hard word.

Tho' niggard throats of Manchester
may bawl,

What England was, shall her true
sons forget ?

We are not cotton-spinners all,

But some love England and her
honour yet.

And these in our Thermopylæ shall
stand,

And hold against the world this
honour of the land.

TWO STANZAS ADDED TO
THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

God bless our Prince and Bride !
God keep their lands allied,
God Save the Queen !
Clothe them with righteousness,
Crown them with happiness,
Them with all blessings bless,
God save the Queen !

Fair fall this hallow'd hour,
Farewell our England's flower,
God save the Queen !
Farewell, fair rose of May !
Let both the people say,
God bless the marriage day,
God bless the Queen !

Times, January, 26, 1858.

THE WAR.

THERE is a sound of thunder afar
Storm in the South that darkens
the day,
Storm of battle and thunder of war,
Well, if it do not roll our way.
Storm ! Storm ! Riflemen form
Ready, be ready to meet the
storm !
Riflemen, riflemen, riflemen
form !

Be not deaf to the sound that warns !
Be not gull'd by a despot's plea !
Are figs of thistles, or grapes of
thorns ?
How should a despot set men free ?
Form ! form ! Riflemen form !
Ready, be ready to meet the
storm !
Riflemen, riflemen, riflemen
form !

Let your Reforms for a moment go,
Look to your butts and take your
aims.
Better a rotten borough or so,
Than a rotten fleet or a city in
flames !
Form ! form ! Riflemen form !
Ready, be ready to meet the
storm !

Riflemen, riflemen, riflemen
form !

Form, be ready to do or die !
Form in Freedom's name and the
Queen's !
True, that we have a faithful ally,
But only the Devil knows what he
means.
Form ! form ! Riflemen form !
Ready, be ready to meet the
storm !
Riflemen, riflemen, riflemen
form !

Times, May 9, 1859.

ODE SUNG AT THE OPENING
OF THE INTERNATIONAL
EXHIBITION, 1862.

UPLIFT a thousand voices full and
sweet,
In this wide hall with earth's in-
vention stor'd,
And praise th' invisible universal
Lord,
Who lets once more in peace the
nations meet,
Where, Science, Art, and Labour
have outpour'd
Their myriad horns of plenty at our
feet.

O silent father of our Kings to be,
Mourn'd in this golden hour of jubilee,
For this, for all, we weep our thanks
to thee !

The world-compelling plan was
thine,
And, lo ! the long laborious miles
Of Palace ; lo ! the giant aisles,
Rich in model and design ;
Harvest-tool and husbandry,
-oom, and wheel, and engin'ry,
Secrets of the sullen mine,
Steel and gold, and corn and wine,
Fabric rough, or Fairyfine,
Sunny tokens of the Line,
Polar marvels, and a feast
Of wonder, out of West and East,

And shapes and hues of Art divine !
 All of beauty, all of use
 That one fair planet can produce,
 Brought from under every star,
 Blown from over every main,
 And mixt, as life is mixt with pain,
 The works of peace with works
 of war.

War himself must make alliance
 With rough Labour and fine
 Science,
 Else he would but strike in vain.

And is the goal so far away ?
 Far, how far, no tongue can say :
 Let us have our dream to-day.

O ye, the wise who think, the wise
 who reign,
 From growing Commerce loose her
 latest chain,
 And let the fair, white-winged peace-
 maker fly
 To happy havens under all the sky,
 And mix the seasons and the golden
 hours,
 Till each man find his own in all
 men's good,
 And all men work in noble brother-
 hood,
 Breaking their mailed fleets and
 armed towers,
 And ruling by obeying nature's
 powers,
 And gathering all the fruits of Peace
 and crown'd with all her flowers.

Fraser's Magazine, June, 1862.

ATTEMPTS AT CLASSIC METRES IN QUANTITY

TRANSLATIONS OF HOMER

Hexameters and Pentameters

THESE lame hexameters the strong-
 wing'd music of Homer !
 No—but a most burlesque barbar-
 ous experiment.
 When was a harsher sound ever heard,
 ye Muses, in England ?

When did a frog coarser croak
 upon our Helicon ?
 Hexameters no worse than daring
 Germany gave us,
 Barbarous experiment, barbarous
 hexameters !

Cornhill Magazine, December, 1863.

LINES FOR THE MAUSOLEUM OF THE DUCHESS OF KENT AT FROGMORE

LONG as the heart beats life within
 her breast,
 Thy child will bless thee, guar-
 dian, mother mild,
 And far away thy memory will be
 blest,
 By children of the children of thy
 child.

Court Journal, March 19, 1864.

ON A MOURNER

NATURE, so far as in her lies,
 Imitates God, and turns her face
 To every land beneath the skies,
 Counts nothing that she meets
 with base,
 But lives and loves in every place ;

II

Fills out the homely quickset-screens,
 And makes the purple lilac ripe,
 Steps from her airy hill, and greens
 The swamp, where hums the
 dropping snipe,
 With moss and braided marsh-
 pipe ;

And on thy heart a finger lays,
 Saying, "beat quicker, for the
 time
 Is pleasant, and the woods and ways
 Are pleasant, and the beech and
 lime
 Put forth and feel a gladder
 clime."

And murmurs of a deeper voice,
 Going before to some far shrine,
 Teach that sick heart the stronger
 choice,
 Till all thy life one way incline
 With one wide will that closes
 thine.

And when the zoning eve has died
 Where yon dark valleys wind
 forlorn,
 Come Hope and Memory, spouse and
 bride,
 From out the borders of the morn,
 With that fair child betwixt them
 born.

And when no mortal motion jars
 The blackness round the tombing
 sod,
 Thro' silence and the trembling stars
 Comes Faith from tracts no feet
 have trod,
 And virtue, like a household god

Promising empire; such as those
 That once at dead of night did
 greet
 Troy's wandering prince, so that he
 rose
 With sacrifice, while all the fleet
 Had rest by stony hills of Crete.

SONG

HOME they brought him slain with
 spears.
 They brought him home at even-
 fall :
 All alone she sits and hears
 Echoes in his empty hall,
 Sounding on the morrow.

The Sun peep'd in from open field,
 The boy began to leap and prance,
 Rode upon his father's lance,
 Beat upon his father's shield—
 "O hush, my joy, my sorrow."

THREE SONNETS TO A
COQUETTE

CARESS'D or chidden by the dainty
 hand,
 And singing airy trifles this or that,
 Light Hope at Beauty's call would
 perch and stand,
 And run thro' every change of
 sharp and flat;
 And Fancy came and at her pillow
 sat,
 When sleep had bound her in his rosy
 band,
 And chased away the still-recurring
 gnat,
 And woke her with a lay from fairy
 land.
 But now they live with Beauty less
 and less,
 For Hope is other Hope and wan-
 ders far,
 Nor cares to lisp in love's de-
 licious creeds;
 And Fancy watches in the wilderness,
 Poor Fancy sadder than a single
 star,
 That sets at twilight in a land
 of reeds.

The form, the form alone is eloquent !
 A nobler yearning never broke
 her rest
 Than but to dance and sing, be
 gaily drest,
 And win all eyes with all accomplish-
 ment :
 Yet in the waltzing-circle as we went,
 My fancy made me for a moment
 blest
 To find my heart so near the beau-
 teous breast
 That once had power to rob it of
 content.
 A moment came the tenderness of
 tears,
 The phantom of a wish that once
 could move,
 A ghost of passion that no smiles
 restore—

For ah! the slight coquette,
 she cannot love,
 And if you kiss'd her feet a thousand
 years,
 She still would take the praise, and
 care no more.

III

Wan Sculptor weepst thou to take
 the cast
 Of those dead lineaments that near
 thee lie ?
 O sorrowest thou, pale Painter, for
 the past,
 In painting some dead friend from
 memory ?
 Weep on : beyond his object Love
 can last :
 His object lives : more cause to
 weep have I :
 My tears, no tears of love, are flowing
 fast,
 No tears of love, but tears that
 Love can die,
 I pledge her not in any cheerful cup,
 Nor care to sit beside her where she
 sits—
 Ah pity—hint it not in human
 tones,
 But breathe it into earth and
 close it up
 With secret death for ever, in the
 pits
 Which some green Christmas
 crams with weary bones.

THE CAPTAIN

A LEGEND OF THE NAVY

He that only rules by terror
 Doeth grievous wrong.
 Deep as Hell I count his error.
 Let him hear my song.
 Brave the Captain was : the seamen
 Made a gallant crew,
 Gallant sons of English freemen,
 Sailors bold and true.
 But they hated his oppression,
 Stern he was and rash ;

So for every light transgression
 Doom'd them to the lash.
 Day by day more harsh and cruel
 Seem'd the Captain's mood.
 Secret wrath like smother'd fuel
 Burnt in each man's blood.
 Yet he hoped to purchase glory,
 Hoped to make the name
 Of his vessel great in story,
 Wheresoe'er he came.
 So they past by capes and islands,
 Many a harbour-mouth,
 Sailing under palmy highlands
 Far within the South.
 On a day when they were going
 O'er the lone expanse,
 In the north, her canvas flowing,
 Rose a ship of Franco.
 Then the Captain's colour heighten'd,
 Joyful came his speech :
 But a cloudy gladness lighten'd
 In the eyes of each.
 " Chase," he said : the ship flew
 forward,
 And the wind did blow ;
 Stately, lightly, went she Norward,
 Till she near'd the foe.
 Then they look'd at him they hated,
 Had what they desired :
 Mute with folded arms they waited—
 Not a gun was fired.
 But they heard the foeman's thunder
 Roaring out their doom ;
 All the air was torn in sunder,
 Crashing went the boom,
 Spars were splinter'd, decks were
 shatter'd,
 Bullets fell like rain ;
 Over mast and deck were scatter'd
 Blood and brains of men.
 Spars were splinter'd ; decks were
 broken ;
 Every mother's son—
 Down they dropt—no word was
 spoken—
 Each beside his gun.
 On the decks as they were lying,
 Were their faces grim.
 In their blood, as they lay dying,
 Did they smile on him.
 Those, in whom he had reliance
 For his noble name,
 With one smile of still defiance
 Sold him unto shame.

Shame and wrath his heart con-	My life is full of weary days,
founded,	But good things have not kept
Pale he turn'd and red,	aloof,
Till himself was deadly wounded	Nor wandered into other ways : ^
Falling on the dead.	I have not lack'd thy mild reproof,
Dismal error ! fearful slaughter !	Nor golden largess of thy praise.
Years have wander'd by,	
Side by side beneath the water	And now shake hands across the
Crew and Captain lie ;	brink
There the sunlit ocean tosses	Of that deep grave to which I
O'er them mouldering,	go :
And the lonely seabird crosses	Shake hands once more : I cannot sink
With one waft of the wing.	So far—far down, but I shall know
	Thy voice, and answer from below.

THE COMING OF ARTHUR

LEODOGRAN, the King of Cameliard, Had one fair daughter, and none other child ;
 And she was fairest of all flesh on earth,
 Guinevere, and in her his one delight.
 For many a petty king ere Arthur came
 Ruled in this isle, and ever waging war
 Each upon other, wasted all the land ;
 And still from time to time the heathen host
 Swarm'd overseas, and harried what was left.
 And so there grew great tracts of wilderness,
 Wherein the beast was ever more and more,
 But man was less and less, till Arthur came.
 For first Aurelius lived and fought and died,
 And after him King Uther fought and died,
 But either fail'd to make the kingdom one.
 And after these King Arthur for a space,
 And thro' the puissance of his Table Round,
 Drew all their petty princedoms under him,
 Their king and head, and made a realm, and reign'd.
 And thus the land of Cameliard was waste,
 Thick with wet woods, and many a beast therein,
 And none or few to scare or chase the beast ;
 So that wild dog, and wolf and boar and bear
 Came night and day, and rooted in the fields,
 And wallow'd in the gardens of the king.
 And ever and anon the wolf would steal
 The children and devour, but now and then,
 Her own brood lost or dead, lent her fierce teat
 To human sucklings ; and the children, housed
 In her foul den, there at their meat would growl,
 And mock their foster-mother on four feet,
 Till, straighten'd, they grew up to wolf-like men,
 Worse than the wolves. And King Leodogran
 Groan'd for the Roman legions here again,
 And Cæsar's eagle : then his brother king,
 Rience, assail'd him : last a heathen horde,
 Reddening the sun with smoke and earth with blood,
 And on the spike that split the mother's heart
 Spitting the child, brake on him, till, amazed,
 He knew not whither he should turn for aid.
 But—for he heard of Arthur newly crown'd,
 Tho' not without an uproar made by those
 Who cried, " He is not Uther's son " —the king

Sent to him, saying, " Arise, and help
us thou !
For here between the man and beast
we die."

And Arthur yet had done no deed
of arms,
But heard the call, and came ; and
Guinevere
Stood by the castle walls to watch
him pass ;
But since he neither wore on helm or
shield
The golden symbol of his kinglihood,
But rode a simple knight among his
knights,
And many of these in richer arms than
he,
She saw him not, or mark'd not, if
she saw,
One among many, tho' his face was
bare.
But Arthur, looking downward as he
past,
Felt the light of her eyes into his life
Smite on the sudden, yet rode on,
and pitch'd
His tents beside the forest. And he
drave
The heathen, and he slew the beast,
and fell'd
The forest, and let in the sun, and
made
Broad pathways for the hunter and
the knight ;
And so return'd.

For while he linger'd there,
A doubt that ever smoulder'd in the
hearts
Of those great Lords and Barons of
his realm
Flash'd forth and into war : for most
of these
Made head against him, crying, " Who
is he
That he should rule us ? who hath
proven him
King Uther's son ? for lo ! we look
at him,
And find nor face nor bearing, limbs
nor voice,
Are like to those of Uther whom we
knew.

This is the son of Gorlois, not the
king ;
This is the son of Anton, not the
king."

And Arthur, passing thence to
battle, felt
Travail, and throes and agonies of the
life,
Desiring to be join'd with Guine-
vere ;
And thinking as he rode, " Her father
said
That there between the man and
beast they die.
Shall I not lift her from this land of
beasts
Up to my throne, and side by side
with me ?
What happiness to reign a lonely
king,
Vext—O ye stars that shudder over
me,
O earth that soundest hollow under
me,
Vext with waste dreams ? for saving
I be join'd
To her that is the fairest under
heaven,
I seem as nothing in the mighty
world,
And cannot will my will, nor work
my work
Wholly, nor make myself in mine own
realm
Victor and lord. But were I join'd
with her, [life,
Then might we live together as one
And reigning with one will in every-
thing
Have power on this dark land to
lighten it,
And power on this dead world to make
it live "

And Arthur from the field of battle
sent
Ulfus, and Brastias, and Bedivere,
His new-made knights, to King
Leodogran,
Saying, " If I in ought have served
thee well,
Give me thy daughter Guinevere to
wife."

Whom when he heard, Leodogran
 in heart
 Debating—"How should I that am
 a king,
 However much he help me at my
 need,
 Give my one daughter saving to a
 king,
 And a king's son"—lifted his voice,
 and call'd
 A hoary man, his chamberlain, to
 whom
 He trusted all things, and of him
 required
 His counsel: "Knowest thou aught
 of Arthur's birth?"

Then spake the hoary chamberlain
 and said,
 "Sir king, there be but two old men
 that know:
 And each is twice as old as I; and
 one
 Is Merlin, the wise man that ever
 served
 King Uther thro' his magic art; and
 one
 Is Merlin's master (so they call him)
 Bleys,
 Who taught him magic; but the
 scholar ran
 Before the master, and so far, that
 Bleys
 Laid magic by, and sat him down,
 and wrote
 All things and whatsoever Merlin did
 In one great annal-book, where after-
 years
 Will learn the secret of our Arthur's
 birth."

To whom the King Leodogran
 replied,
 "O friend, had I been holpen half as
 well
 By this King Arthur as by thee to-
 day,
 Then beast and man had had their
 share of me:
 But summon here before us yet once
 more
 Ulfius, and Brastias, and Bedivere."

Then, when they came before him,
 the king said,

"I have seen the cuckoo chased by
 lesser fowl,
 And reason in the chase: but where-
 fore now
 Do these your lords stir up the heat
 of war,
 Some calling Arthur born of Gorlois,
 Others of Anton? Tell me, ye your-
 selves,
 Hold ye this Arthur for King Uther's
 son?"

And Ulfius and Brastias answer'd,
 "Ay."
 Then Bedivere, the first of all his
 knights
 Knighted by Arthur at his crowning,
 spake—
 For bold in heart and act and word
 was he,
 Whenever slander breathed against
 the king—

"Sir, there be many rumours on
 this head:
 For there be those who hate him in
 their hearts,
 Call him baseborn, and since his ways
 are sweet,
 And theirs are bestial, hold him less
 than man:
 And there be those who deem him
 more than man,
 And dream he dropt from heaven:
 but my belief
 In all this matter—so ye care to
 learn—
 Sir, for ye know that in King Uther's
 time
 The prince and warrior Gorlois, he
 that held
 Tintagil castle by the Cornish sea,
 Was wedded with a winsome wife,
 Ygerne:
 And daughters had she borne him,—
 one whereof
 Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney,
 Bellicent,
 Hath ever like a loyal sister cleaved
 To Arthur,—but a son she had not
 borne.
 And Uther cast upon her eyes of love:
 But she, a stainless wife of Gorlois,
 So loathed the bright dishonour of his
 love,

That Gorlois and King Uther went
 to war :
 And overthrown was Gorlois and slain.
 Then Uther in his wrath and heat
 besieged
 Ygerne within Tintagil, where her
 men,
 Seeing the mighty swarm about their
 walls,
 Left her and fled, and Uther enter'd
 in,
 And there was none to call to but
 himself.
 So, compass'd by the power of the
 king,
 Enforced she was to wed him in her
 tears,
 And with a shameful swiftness :
 afterward,
 Not many moons, King Uther died
 himself,
 Moaning and wailing for an heir to
 rule [wrack.
 After him, lest the realm should go to
 And that same night, the night of the
 new year,
 By reason of the bitterness and grief
 That vex'd his mother, all before his
 time
 Was Arthur born, and all as soon as
 born
 Deliver'd at a secret postern-gate
 To Merlin, to be holden far apart
 Until his hour should come ; because
 the lords
 Of that fierce day were as the lords
 of this,
 Wild beasts, and surely would have
 torn the child
 Piecemeal among them, had they
 known ; for each
 But sought to rule for his own self
 and hand,
 And many hated Uther for the sake
 Of Gorlois. Wherefore Merlin took
 the child,
 And gave him to Sir Anton, an old
 knight
 And ancient friend of Uther ; and his
 wife
 Nursed the young prince, and rear'd
 him with her own ;
 And no man knew. And ever since
 the lords

Have foughten like wild beasts among
 themselves,
 So that the realm has gone to wrack :
 but now,
 This year, when Merlin (for his hour
 had come)
 Brought Arthur forth, and set him
 in the hall,
 Proclaiming, ' Here is Uther's heir,
 your king,'
 A hundred voices cried, ' Away with
 him !
 No king of ours ! a son of Gorlois he,
 Or else the child of Anton, and no
 king,
 Or else baseborn.' Yet Merlin thro'
 his craft,
 And while the people clamour'd for a
 king,
 Had Arthur crown'd ; but after, the
 great lords
 Banded, and so brake out in open
 war."

Then while the king debated with
 himself
 If Arthur were the child of shameful-
 ness,
 Or born the son of Gorlois, after
 death,
 Or Uther's son, and born before his
 time,
 Or whether there were truth in any-
 thing
 Said by these three, there came to
 Cameliard,
 With Gawain and young Modred, her
 two sons,
 Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney,
 Bellicent ;
 Whom as he could, not as he would,
 the king
 Made feast for, saying, as they sat at
 meat,
 " A doubtful throne is ice on
 summer seas—
 Ye come from Arthur's court : think
 ye this king—
 So few his knights, however brave
 they be—
 Hath body enow to beat his foemen
 down ? "

"O king," she cried, "and I will
tell thee : few,
Few, but all brave, all of one mind
with him ;
For I was near him when the savage
yells
Of Uther's peerage died, and Arthur
sat
Crown'd on the dais, and his warriors
cried,
' Be thou the king, and we will work
thy will
Who love thee.' Then the king in
low deep tones,
And simple words of great authority,
Bound them by so strait vows to his
own self,
That when they rose, knighted from
kneeling, some
Were pale as at the passing of a ghost,
Some flush'd, and others dazed, as one
who wakes
Half-blinded at the coming of a light.

"But when he spake and cheer'd
his Table Round
With large divine and comfortable
words
Beyond my tongue to tell thee—I
beheld
From eye to eye thro' all their Order
flash
A momentary likeness of the king :
And ere it left their faces, thro' the
cross
And those around it and the Crucified,
Down from the casement over Arthur,
smote
Flame-colour, vert and azure, in
three rays,
One falling upon each of three fair
queens,
Who stood in silence near his throne,
the friends
Of Arthur, gazing on him, tall, with
bright
Sweet faces, who will help him at his
need.

"And there I saw mage Merlin,
whose vast wit
And hundred winters are but as the
hands

Of loyal vassals toiling for their liege.

"And near him stood the Lady of
the Lake,
Who knows a subtler magic than his
own—
Clothed in white samite, mystic,
wonderful.
She gave the king his huge cross-
hilted sword,
Whereby to drive the heathen out : a
mist {face
Of incense curl'd about her, and her
Wellnigh was hidden in the minster
gloom ;
But there was heard among the holy
hymns
A voice as of the waters, for she
dwells
Down in a deep, calm, whatsoever
storms
May shake the world, and when the
surface rolls,
Hath power to walk the waters like
our Lord.

"There likewise I beheld Excalibur
Before him at his crowning borne, the
sword
That rose from out the bosom of the
lake,
And Arthur row'd across and took it
—rich
With jewels, elfin Urim, on the hilt,
Bewildering heart and eye—the blade
so bright
That men are blinded by it—on one
side,
Graven in the oldest tongue of all this
world,
' Take me,' but turn the blade and
you shall see,
And written in the speech ye speak
yourself,
' Cast me away !' And sad was
Arthur's face
Taking it, but old Merlin counsel'd
him,
' Take thou and strike ! the time to
cast away
Is yet far-off.' So this great brand
the king
Took, and by this will beat his for-
men down."

Thercat Leodogran rejoiced, but
 thought
 To sift his doubtings to the last, and
 ask'd,
 Fixing full eyes of question on her
 face,
 "The swallow and the swift are near
 akin,
 But thou art closer to this noble
 prince,
 Being his own dear sister"; and she
 said,
 "Daughter of Gorlois and Ygerne am
 I";
 "And therefore Arthur's sister?"
 ask'd the King.
 She answer'd, "These be secret
 things," and sign'd
 To those two sons to pass and let
 them be.
 And Gawain went, and breaking into
 song
Sprang out, and follow'd by his flying
hair [saw :
 Ran like a colt, and leapt at all he
 But Modred laid his ear beside the
 doors,
 And there half heard; the same that
 afterward
 Struck for the throne, and striking
 found his doom.

And then the Queen made answer,
 "What know I?
 For dark my mother was in eyes and
 hair,
 And dark in hair and eyes am I; and
 dark
 Was Gorlois, yea and dark was Uther,
 too,
 Wellnigh to blackness; but this
 king is fair
 Beyond the race of Britons and of
 men.
 Moreover, always in my mind I hear
 A cry from out the dawning of my life,
 A mother weeping, and I hear her say,
 'O that ye had some brother, pretty
 one,
 To guard thee on the rough ways of
 the world.'"

"Ay," said the King, "and hear ye
 such a cry?"

But when did Arthur chance upon
 thee first?"

"O king!" she cried, "and I will
 tell thee true:
 He found me first when yet a little
 maid:
 Beaten I had been for a little fault
 Whereof I was not guilty; and out I
 ran
 And flung myself down on a bank of
 heath,
 And hated this fair world and all
 therein,
 And wept, and wish'd that I were
 dead; and he—
 I know not whether of himself he
 came,
 Or brought by Merlin, who, they say,
 can walk
 Unseen at pleasure—he was at my
 side,
 And spake sweet words, and com-
 forted my heart,
 And dried my tears, being a child with
 me.
 And many a time he came, and ever-
 more
 As I grew greater grew with me; and
 sad
 At times he seem'd, and sad with him
 was I,
 Stern, too, at times, and then I loved
 him not,
 But sweet again, and then I loved
 him well.
 And now of late I see him less and less,
 But those first days had golden hours
 for me,
 For then I surely thought he would
 be king.
 "But let me tell thee now another
 tale:
 For Bleys, our Merlin's master, as
 they say,
 Died but of late, and sent his cry to
 me,
 To hear him speak before he left his
 life.
 Shrunk like a fairy changeling lay
 the mage,
 And when I enter'd told me that
 himself

And Merlin ever served about the king,
 Uther, before he died, and on the night
 When Uther in Tintagil past away
 Moaning and wailing for an heir, the two
 Left the still king, and passing forth
 to breathe,
 Then from the castle gateway by the chasm
 Descending thro' the dismal night—
 a night
 In which the bounds of heaven and earth were lost—
 Beheld, so high upon the dreary deeps
 It seem'd in heaven, a ship, the shape thereof
 A dragon wing'd, and all from stem
 to stern
 Bright with a shining people on the decks,
 And gone as soon as seen. And then the two
 Dropt to the cove, and watch'd the great sea fall,
 Wave after wave, each mightier than the last,
 Till last, a ninth one, gathering half the deep
 And full of voices, slowly rose and plunged
 Roaring, and all the wave was in a flame:
 And down the wave and in the flame was borne
 A naked babe, and rode to Merlin's feet,
 Who stoopt and caught the babe, and cried 'The King!
 Here is an heir for Uther!' And the fringe
 Of that great breaker, sweeping up the strand,
 Lash'd at the wizard as he spake the word,
 And all at once all round him rose in fire,
 So that the child and he were clothed in fire.
 And presently thereafter follow'd calm,
 Free sky and stars: 'And this same child,' he said,

'Is he who reigns; nor could I part in peace
 Till this were told.' And saying this the seer
 Went thro' the strait and dreadful pass of death,
 Not ever to be question'd any more
 Save on the further side; but when I met
 Merlin, and ask'd him if these things were truth—
 The shining dragon and the naked child
 Descending in the glory of the seas—
 He laugh'd as is his wont, and answer'd me
 In riddling triplets of old time, and said:
 " 'Rain, rain, and sun! a rainbow in the sky!
 A young man will be wiser by and by;
 An old man's wit may wander ere he die.
 Rain, rain, and sun! a rainbow on the lea!
 And truth is this to me, and that to thee;
 And truth or clothed or naked let it be.
 Rain, sun, and rain! and the free blossom blows;
 Sun, rain, and sun! and where is he who knows?
 From the great deep to the great deep he goes.'
 "So Merlin riddling anger'd me;
 but thou
 Fear not to give this king thine only child,
 Guinevere: so great bards of him will sing
 Hereafter; and dark sayings from of old
 Ranging and ringing thro' the minds of men,
 And echo'd by old folk beside their fires
 For comfort after their wage-work is done,
 Speak of the king; and Merlin in our time
 Hath spoken also, not in jest, and sworn

Tho' men may wound him that he
 will not die,
 But pass, again to come; and then
 or now
 Utterly smite the heathen underfoot,
 Till these and all men hail him for
 their king."

She spake and King Leodogran
 rejoiced,
 But musing "Shall I answer yea or
 nay?"
 Doubted, and drowsed, nodded and
 slept, and saw,
 Dreaming, a slope of land that ever
 grew,
 Field after field, up to a height, the
 peak
 Haze-hidden, and thereon a phantom
 king,
 Now looming, and now lost; and on
 the slope
 The sword rose, the hind fell, the herd
 was driven,
 Fire glimpsed; and all the land from
 roof and rick,
 In drifts of smoke before a rolling
 wind,
 Stream'd to the peak, and mingled
 with the haze
 And made it thicker; while the phan-
 tom king
 Sent out at times a voice; and here
 or there
 Stood one who pointed toward the
 voice, the rest
 Slew on and burnt, crying, "No
 king of ours,
 No son of Uther, and no king of
 ours";
 Till with a wink his dream was
 changed, the haze
 Descended, and the solid earth be-
 came
 As nothing, and the king stood out in
 heaven,
 Crown'd. And Leodogran awoke,
 and sent
 Ulfus, and Brastias and Bedivere,
 Back to the court of Arthur answer-
 ing yea.

Then Arthur charged his warrior
 whom he loved

And honour'd most, Sir Lancelot, to
 ride forth
 And bring the Queen;—and watch'd
 him from the gates:
 And Lancelot past away among the
 flowers
 (For then was latter April), and re-
 turn'd
 Among the flowers, in May, with
 Guinevere.
 To whom arrived, by Dubric the high
 saint,
 Chief of the church in Britain, and
 before
 The stateliest of her altar-shrines, the
 king
 That morn was married, while in
 stainless white,
 The fair beginners of a nobler time,
 And glorying in their vows and him,
 his knights
 Stood round him, and rejoicing in
 his joy.
 And holy Dubric spread his hands and
 spake,
 "Reign ye, and live and love, and
 make the world
 Other, and may thy Queen be one
 with thee,
 And all this Order of thy Table
 Round
 Fulfil the boundless purpose of their
 king."

Then at the marriage feast came in
 from Rome,
 The slowly-fading mistress of the
 world,
 Great lords, who claim'd the tribute
 as of yore.
 But Arthur spake, "Behold, for these
 have sworn
 To fight my wars, and worship me
 their king;
 The old order changeth, yielding
 place to new;
 And we that fight for our fair father
 Christ,
 Seeing that ye be grown too weak and
 old
 To drive the heathen from your
 Roman wall,
 No tribute will we pay": so those
 great lords

Drew back in wrath, and Arthur	Drew in the petty princedoms under
strove with Rome.	him,
And Arthur and his knighthood for	Fought, and in twelve great battles
a space [strength the king	overcame
Were all one will, and thro' that	The heathen hordes, and made a realm
	and reign'd,

THE HOLY GRAIL

FROM noiseful arms, and acts of	Nor ever stray'd beyond the pale:
prowess done	but thee,
In tournament or tilt, Sir Percivale,	When first thou camest—such a
Whom Arthur and his knighthood	courtesy
call'd The Pure,	Spake thro' the limbs and in the voice
Had pass'd into the silent life of	—I knew
prayer,	For one of those who eat in Arthur's
Praise, fast, and alms; and leaving	hall;
for the cowl	For good ye are and bad, and like to
The helmet in an abbey far away	coins, [of you
From Camelot, there, and not long	Some true, some light, but every one
after, died.	Stamp'd with the image of the King:
	and now
And one, a fellow-monk among the	Tell me, what drove thee from the
rest,	Table Round,
Ambrosius, loved him much beyond	My brother? was it earthly passion
the rest,	crost?"
And honour'd him, and wrought into	
his heart	"Nay," said the knight; "for no
A way by love that waken'd love	such passion mine.
within,	But the sweet vision of the Holy
To answer that which came: and as	Grail
they sat	Drove me from all vainglories, rival-
Beneath a world-old yew-tree, dark-	ries,
ening half	And earthly heats that spring and
The cloisters, on a gustful April morn	sparkle out
That puff'd the swaying branches	Among us in the jousts, while women
into smoke	watch
Above them, ere the summer when he	Who wins, who falls; and waste the
died,	spiritual strength
The monk Ambrosius question'd	Within us, better offer'd up to
Percivale:	Heaven."
"O brother, I have seen this yew-	To whom the monk: "The Holy
tree smoke,	Grail!—I trust
Spring after spring, for half a hundred	We are green in Heaven's eyes; but
years:	here too much
For never have I known the world	We moulder—as to things without I
without,	mean—

Yet one of your own knights, a guest
 of ours,
 Told us of this in our refectory,
 But spake with such a sadness and so
 low
 We heard not half of what he said.
 What is it ?
 The phantom of a cup that comes and
 goes ? ”

“ Nay, monk ! what phantom ? ”
 answer'd Percivale.

“ The cup, the cup itself, from which
 our Lord
 Drank at the last sad supper with His
 own.

This, from the blessed land of Aro-
 mat—

After the day of darkness, when the
 dead

Went wandering o'er Moriah—the
 good saint,

Arimathæan Joseph, journeying
 brought

To Glastonbury, where the winter
 thorn

Blossoms at Christmas, mindful of
 our Lord,

And there awhile it bode ; and if a
 man

Could touch or see it, he was heal'd at
 once,

By faith, of all his ills. But then the
 times

Grew to such evil that the holy cup
 Was caught away to Heaven, and
 disappear'd.”

To whom the monk : “ From our
 old books I know

That Joseph came of old to Glaston-
 bury,

And there the heathen Prince, Arvira-
 gus,

Gave him an isle of marsh whereon to
 build ;

And there he built with wattles from
 the marsh

A little lonely church in days of yore,
 For so they say, these books of ours,
 but seem

Mute of this miracle, far as I have
 read.

But who first saw the holy thing to-
 day ? ”

“ A woman,” answer'd Percivale,
 “ a nun,

And one no further off in blood from
 me

Than sister ; and if ever holy maid
 With knees of adoration wore the
 stone,

A holy maid ; tho' never maiden
 glow'd,

But that was in her earlier maiden-
 hood,

With such a fervent flame of human
 love,

Which being rudely blunted, glanced
 and shot

Only to holy things ; to prayer and
 praise

She gave herself, to fast and alms.
 And yet,

Nun as she was, the scandal of the
 Court,

Sin against Arthur and the Table
 Round,

And the strange sound of an adulter-
 ous race,

Across the iron grating of her cell
 Beat, and she pray'd and fasted all
 the more.

“ And he to whom she told her sins,
 or what

Her all but utter whiteness held for
 sin,

A man well-nigh a hundred winters
 old,

Spake often with her of the Holy
 Grail, [six,

A legend handed down thro' five or
 And each of these a hundred winters

old,
 From our Lord's time. And when

King Arthur made
 His Table Round, and all men's

hearts became
 Clean for a season, surely he had

thought
 That now the Holy Grail would come

again ;
 But sin broke out. Ah, Christ, that

it would come,
 And heal the world of all their wicked-
 ness !

‘ O Father ! ’ asked the maiden,
 ‘ might it come

To me by prayer and fasting ? ' Nay,' said he,
 ' I know not, for thy heart is pure as snow.'
 And so she pray'd and fasted, till the sun
 Shone, and the wind blew, thro' her, and I thought
 She might have risen and floated when I saw her.

" For on a day she sent to speak with me.
 And when she came to speak, behold her eyes
 Beyond my knowing of them, beautiful,
 Beyond all knowing of them, wonderful,
 Beautiful in the light of holiness.
 And ' O my brother, Percivale,' she said,
 ' Sweet brother, I have seen the Holy Grail :
 For, waked at dead of night, I heard a sound
 As of a silver horn from o'er the hills blown, and I thought, " It is not Arthur's use
 To hunt by moonlight " ; and the slender sound
 As from distance beyond distance grew
 Coming upon me—O never harp nor horn,
 Nor aught we blow with breath, or touch with hand, [then
 Was like that music as it came ; and Stream'd thro' my cell a cold and silver beam,
 And down the long beam stole the Holy Grail,
 Rose-red with beatings in it, as if alive,
 Till all the white walls of my cell were dyed
 With rosy colours leaping on the wall ;
 And then the music faded, and the Grail
 Pass'd, and the beam decay'd, and from the walls
 The rosy quiverings died into the night.

So now the Holy Thing is here again
 Among us, brother, fast, thou, too, and pray,
 And tell thy brother knights to fast and pray,
 That so perchance the vision may be seen
 By thee and those, and all the world be heal'd.'

" Then leaving the pale nun, I spake of this
 To all men ; and myself fasted and pray'd
 Always, and many among us many a week
 Fasted and pray'd even to the uttermost,
 Expectant of the wonder that would be.

" And one there was among us, ever moved
 Among us in white armour, Galahad, ' God make thee good as thou art beautiful,'
 Said Arthur, when he dubb'd him knight ; and none,
 In so young youth, was ever made a knight
 Till Galahad ; and this Galahad, when he heard
 My sister's vision, fill'd me with amaze ;
 His eyes became so like her own, they seem'd
 Hers, and himself her brother more than I.

" Sister or brother none had he ; but some
 Call'd him a son of Lancelot, and some said
 Begotten by enchantment—chatterers they,
 Like birds of passage piping up and down,
 That gape for flies—we know not whence they come ;
 For when was Lancelot wanderingly lewd ?

" But she, the wan sweet maiden shore away

Clean from her forehead all that
 wealth of hair
 Which made a silken mat-work for
 her feet;
 And out of this she plaited broad and
 long
 A strong sword-belt, and wove with
 silver thread
 And crimson in the bell a strange
 device,
 A crimson grail within a silver beam;
 And saw the bright boy-knight, and
 bound it on him,
 Saying, 'My knight, my love, my
 knight of heaven,
 O thou, my love, whose love is one
 with mine,
 I, maiden, round thee, maiden, bind
 my belt.
 Go forth, for thou shalt see what I
 have seen,
 And break thro' all, till one will
 crown thee king
 Far in the spiritual city': and as
 she spake [eyes
 She sent the deathless passion in her
 Thro' him, and made him hers, and
 laid her mind
 On him, and he believed in her belief.

"Then came a year of miracle: O
 brother,
 In our great hall there stood a vacant
 chair,
 Fashion'd by Merlin ere he past away,
 And carven with strange figures; and
 in and out
 The figures, like a serpent, ran a scroll
 Of letters in a tongue no man could
 read.
 And Merlin call'd it 'The Siege
 perilous,'
 Perilous for good and ill; 'for there,'
 he said,
 'No man could sit but he should lose
 himself':
 And once by misadventure Merlin
 sat
 In his own chair, and so was lost; but
 he,
 Galahad, when he heard of Merlin's
 doom,
 Cried, 'If I lose myself I save my-
 self!'

"Then on a summer night it came
 to pass,
 While the great banquet lay along the
 hall,
 That Galahad would sit down in
 Merlin's chair.

"And all at once, as there we sat,
 we heard
 A cracking and a riving of the roofs,
 And rending, and a blast, and over-
 head
 Thunder, and in the thunder was a
 cry.
 And in the blast there smote along
 the hall
 A beam of light seven times more
 clear than day:
 And down the long beam stole the
 Holy Grail
 All over cover'd with a luminous
 cloud,
 And none might see who bare it, and
 it past.
 But every knight beheld his fellow's
 face
 As in a glory, and all the knights arose,
 And staring each at other like dumb
 men
 Stood, till I found a voice and sware a
 vow.

"I sware a vow before them all,
 that I,
 Because I had not seen the Grail,
 would ride
 A twelvemonth and a day in quest of
 it,
 Until I found and saw it, as the nun
 My sister saw it; and Galahad sware
 the vow,
 And good Sir Bors, our Lancelot's
 cousin, sware,
 And Lancelot sware, and many
 among the knights,
 And Gawain sware, and louder than
 the rest."

Then spake the monk Ambrosius,
 asking him,
 "What said the King? Did Arthur
 take the vow?"

"Nay, for my lord," said Percivale,
 "the King,

Was not in hall : for early that same day,
 'Scaped thro' a cavern from a bandit hold,
 An outraged maiden sprang into the hall
 Crying on help : for all her shining hair
 Was smear'd with earth, and either milky arm
 Red-rent with hooks of bramble, and all she wore
 Torn as a sail that leaves the rope is torn
 In tempest : so the King arose and went
 To smoke the scandalous hive of those wild bees
 That made such honey in his realm.
 Howbeit
 Some little of this marvel he, too, saw,
 Returning o'er the plain that then began
 To darken under Camelot ; whence the King
 Look'd up, calling aloud, ' Lo there ! the roofs
 Of our great hall are rolled in thunder-smoke !
 Pray Heaven, they be not smitten by the bolt.'
 For dear to Arthur was that hall of ours,
 As having there so oft with all his knights
 Feasted, and as the stateliest under heaven.

 " O brother, had you known our mighty hall,
 Which Merlin built for Arthur long ago !
 For all the sacred mount of Camelot,
 And all the dim rich city, roof by roof,
 Tower after tower, spire beyond spire,
 By grove, and garden-lawn, and rushing brook,
 Climbs to the mighty hall that Merlin built.
 And four great zones of sculpture, set betwixt
 With many a mystic symbol, gird the hall :

 And in the lowest beasts are slaying men,
 And in the second men are slaying beasts,
 And on the third are warriors, perfect men,
 And on the fourth are men with growing wings,
 And over all one statue in the mould
 Of Arthur, made by Merlin, with a crown,
 And peak'd wings pointed to the Northern Star.
 And eastward fronts the statue, and the crown
 And both the wings are made of gold, and flame
 At sunrise till the people in far fields,
 Wasted so often by the heathen hordes,
 Behold it, crying, ' We have still a king.'

 " And, brother, had you known our hall within,
 Broader and higher than any in all the lands !
 Where twelve great windows blazon Arthur's wars,
 And all the light that falls upon the board
 Streams thro' the twelve great battles of our King.
 Nay, one there is, and at the eastern end,
 Wealthy with wandering lines of mount and mere,
 Where Arthur finds the brand, Excalibur.
 And also one to the west, and counter to it,
 And blank : and who shall blazon it ? when and how ?—
 O there, perchance, when all our wars are done,
 The brand Excalibur will be cast away.

 " So to this hall full quickly rode the King,
 In horror lest the work by Merlin wrought,
 Dreamlike, should on the sudden vanish, wrapt

In unremorseful folds of rolling fire.
And in he rode, and up I glanced, and
saw

The golden dragon sparkling over all :
And many of those who burnt the
hold, their arms

Hack'd, and their foreheads grimed
with smoke, and scar'd,
Follow'd, and in among bright faces,
ours,

Full of the vision, prest : and then
the King

Spake to me, being nearest, " Perci-
vale,"

(Because the hall was all in tumult—
some

Vowing, and some protesting), ' what
is this ? '

" O brother, when I told him what
had chanced,

My sister's vision, and the rest, his
face

Darken'd, as I have seen it more than
once,

When some brave deed seem'd to be
done in vain,

Darken ; and ' Woe is me, my
knights,' he cried,

' Had I been here, ye had not sworn
the vow.'

Bold was mine answer, ' Had thyself
been here,

My King, thou wouldst have sworn.'

' Yca, yea,' said he,
' Art thou so bold and hast not seen
the Grail ? '

" ' Nay, Lord, I heard the sound, I
saw the light,

But since I did not see the Holy
Thing,

I swear a vow to follow it till I saw.'

" Then when he asked us, knight by
knight, if any

Had seen it, all their answers were as
one :

' Nay, Lord, and therefore have we
sworn our vows.'

" ' Lo now,' said Arthur, ' have ye
seen a cloud ?

What go ye into the wilderness to
see ? '

" Then Galahad on the sudden, and
in a voice

Shrilling along the hall to Arthur,
call'd,

' But I, Sir Arthur, saw the Holy
Grail,

I saw the Holy Grail and heard a
cry—

" O Galahad, and O Galahad, follow
me." '

" ' Ah ! Galahad, Galahad,' said the
King, ' for such

As thou art is the vision, not for these.
Thy holy nun and thou have seen a
sign—

Holier is none, my Percivale, than
she—

A sign to maim this Order which I
made,

But you, that follow but the leader's
bell '

(Brother, the King was hard upon his
knights)

' Taliessin is our fullest throat of
song,

And one hath sung and all the dumb
will sing. [borne

Lancelot is Lancelot, and hath over-
Five knights at once, and every

younger knight,

Unproven, holds himself as Lancelot,
Till overborne by one, he learns—and

ye,
What are ye ? Galahads ?—no, nor
Percivales '

(For thus it pleased the King to range
me close

After Sir Galahad) ; ' nay,' said he,
' but men

With strength and will to right the
wrong'd, of power

To lay the sudden heads of violence
flat,

Knights that in twelve great battles
splash'd and dyed

The strong White Horse in his own
heathen blood—

But one hath seen, and all the blind
will see.

Go, since your vows are sacred, being
made :

Yet—for ye know the cries or all my
realm

Pass thro' this hall—how often, O my knights,
 Your places being vacant at my side,
 This chance of noble deeds will come
 and go
 Unchallenged, while you follow
 wandering fires
 Lost in the quagmire? Many of you,
 yea most,
 Return no more: ye think I show
 myself
 Too dark a prophet: come now, let
 us meet
 The morrow morn once more in one
 full field
 Of gracious pastime, that once more
 the King,
 Before you leave him for 'his Quest,
 may count
 The yet-unbroken strength of all his
 knights,
 Rejoicing in that Order which he
 made.'

"So when the sun broke next from
 under ground,
 All the great table of our Arthur
 closed
 And clash'd in such a tourney and so
 full,
 So many lances broken—never yet
 Had Camelot seen the like, since
 Arthur came;
 And I myself and Galahad, for a
 strength
 Was in us from the vision, overthrew
 So many knights that all the people
 cried,
 And almost burst the barriers in their
 heat,
 Shouting 'Sir Galahad and Sir Perci-
 vale!'

"But when the next day brake
 from under ground—
 O brother, had you known our
 Camelot,
 Built by old kings, age after age, so
 old
 The King himself had fears that it
 would fall,
 So strange, and rich, and dim; for
 where the roofs
 Totter'd toward each other in the
 sky,

Met foreheads all along the street of
 those
 Who watch'd us pass; and lower,
 and where the long
 Rich galleries, lady-laden, weigh'd
 the necks
 Of dragons clinging to the crazy
 walls,
 Thicker than drops from thunder,
 showers of flowers
 Fell as we past; and men and boys
 astride
 On wyvern, lion, dragon, griffin, swan,
 At all the corners, named us each by
 name,
 Calling 'God speed!' but in the street
 below
 The knights and ladies wept, and
 rich and poor
 Wept, and the King himself could
 hardly speak
 For grief, and in the middle street the
 Queen,
 Who rode by Lancelot, wail'd and
 shriek'd aloud,
 'This madness has come on us for our
 sins,'
 And then we reach'd the weirdly-
 sculptured gate,
 Where Arthur's wars were render'd
 mystically,
 And thence departed every one his
 way.

"And I was lifted up in heart, and
 thought
 Of all my late-shown prowess in the
 lists,
 How my strong lance had beaten
 down the knights,
 So many and famous names; and
 never yet
 Had heaven appear'd so blue, nor
 earth so green,
 For all my blood danced in me, and I
 knew
 That I should light upon the Holy
 Grail.

"Thereafter, the dark warning of
 our King,
 That most of us would follow wander-
 ing fires,
 Came like a driving gloom across my
 mind.

Then every evil word I had spoken
 once,
 And every evil thought I had thought
 of old,
 And every evil deed I ever did,
 Awoke and cried, ' This Quest is not
 for thee.'
 And lifting up mine eyes, I found
 myself
 Alone, and in a land of sand and
 thorns,
 And I was thirsty even unto death ;
 And I, too, cried, ' This Quest is not
 for thee.'

" And on I rode, and when I
 thought my thirst
 Would slay me, saw deep lawns, and
 then a brook,
 With one sharp rapid, where the
 crisping white
 Play'd ever back upon the sloping
 wave,
 And took both ear and eye ; and o'er
 the brook
 Were apple-trees, and apples by the
 brook
 Fallen, and on the lawns. ' I will
 rest here,'
 I said, ' I am not worthy of the
 Quest' ;
 But even while I drank the brook,
 and ate
 The goodly apples, all these things at
 once
 Fell into dust, and I was left alone,
 And thirsting, in a land of sand and
 thorns.

" And then behold a woman at a
 door
 Spinning ; and fair the house whereby
 she sat,
 And kind the woman's eyes and
 innocent,
 And all her bearing gracious ; and she
 rose
 Opening her arms to meet me, as who
 should say,
 ' Rest here ' ; but when I touched her,
 lo ! she, too,
 Fell into dust and nothing, and the
 house
 Became no better than a broken shed,

And in it a dead babe ; and also this
 Fell into dust, and I was left alone.

" And on I rode, and greater was
 my thirst.
 Then flash'd a yellow gleam across
 the world,
 And where it smote the plowshare in
 the field,
 The plowman left his plowing, and
 fell down [pail,
 Before it ; where it glitter'd on her
 The milkmaid left her milking, and
 fell down
 Before it, and I knew not why, but
 thought
 ' The sun is rising,' tho' the sun had
 risen.
 Then was I ware of one that on me
 moved
 In golden armour with a crown of
 gold
 About a casque all jewels ; and his
 horse
 In golden armour jewell'd every-
 where :
 And on the splendour came, flashing
 me blind ;
 And seem'd to me the Lord of all the
 world,
 Being so huge. But when I thought
 he meant
 To crush me, moving on me, lo ! he,
 too,
 Opened his arms to embrace me as he
 came,
 And up I went and touch'd him, and
 he, too,
 Fell into dust, and I was left alone
 And wearying in a land of sand and
 thorns.

" And I rode on and found a
 mighty hill,
 And on the top, a city wall'd : the
 spires
 Prick'd with incredible pinnacles into
 heaven.
 And by the gateway stirr'd a crowd ;
 and these
 Cried to me climbing, ' Welcome,
 Percivale !
 Thou mightiest and thou purest
 among men ! '

And glad was I and clomb, but found
 at top
 No man, nor any voice. And thence
 I past
 Far thro' a ruinous city, and I saw
 That man had once dwelt there ; but
 there I found
 Only one man of an exceeding age.
 ' Where is that goodly company ? '
 said I,
 ' That so cried out upon me ? ' and he
 had
 Scarce any voice to answer, and yet
 gasp'd
 ' Whence and what art thou ? ' and
 even as he spoke
 Fell into dust, and disappear'd, and I
 Was left alone once more, and cried in
 grief,
 ' Lo, if I find the Holy Grail itself
 And touch it, it will crumble into
 dust.'

" And thence I dropt into a lowly
 vale,
 Low as the hill was high, and where
 the vale
 Was lowest, found a chapel and
 thereby
 A holy hermit in a hermitage,
 To whom I told my phantoms, and
 he said :

" ' O son, thou hast not true
 humility,
 The highest virtue, mother of them
 all ;
 For when the Lord of all things made
 Himself
 Naked of glory for His mortal change,
 " Take thou my robe," she said, " for
 all is thine,"
 And all her form shone forth with
 sudden light
 So that the angels were amazed, and
 she
 Follow'd him down, and like a flying
 star
 Led on the grey-hair'd wisdom of the
 east ;
 But her thou hast not known : for
 what is this
 Thou thoughtest of thy prowess and
 thy sins ?

Thou hast not lost thyself to save
 thyself
 As Galahad.' When the hermit
 made an end,
 In silver armour suddenly Galahad
 shone
 Before us, and against the chapel door
 Laid lance, and enter'd, and we knelt
 in prayer.
 And there the hermit slaked my
 burning thirst
 And at the sacring of the mass I saw
 The holy elements alone ; but he :
 ' Saw ye no more ? I, Galahad, saw
 the Grail,
 The Holy Grail, descend upon the
 shrine :
 I saw the fiery face as of a child
 That smote itself into the bread, and
 went ;
 And hither am I come ; and never
 yet
 Hath what thy sister taught me first
 to see,
 This Holy Thing, fail'd from my side,
 nor come
 Cover'd, but moving with me night
 and day,
 Fainter by day, but always in the
 night
 Blood-red, and sliding down the
 blacken'd marsh
 Blood-red, and on the naked moun-
 tain top
 Blood-red, and in the sleeping mere
 below
 Blood-red. And in the strength of
 this I rode,
 Shattering all evil customs every-
 where,
 And past thro' Pagan realms, and
 made them mine,
 And clash'd with Pagan hordes, and
 bore them down,
 And broke thro' all, and in the
 strength of this
 Come victor. But my time is hard
 at hand,
 And hence I go ; and one will crown
 me king
 Far in the spiritual city ; and come
 thou, too,
 For thou shalt see the vision when I
 go.'

" While thus he spake, his eye, And o'er his head the holy vessel
 dwelling on mine, hung
 Drew me, with power upon me, till I Clothed in white samite or a luminous
 grew cloud.
 One with him, to believe as he be- And with exceeding swiftness ran the
 lieved. boat
 Then, when the day began to wane, If boat it were—I saw not whence it
 we went. came.
 " There rose a hill that none but And when the heavens open'd and
 man could climb, blazed again
 Scarr'd with a hundred wintry water- Roaring, I saw him like a silver star—
 courses— And had he set the sail, or had the
 boat
 Storm at the top, and when we gain'd Become a living creature clad with
 it, storm wings ?
 Round us and death ; for every And o'er his head the holy vessel hung
 moment glanced Redder than any rose, a joy to me,
 His silver arms and gloom'd : so For now I knew the veil had been
 quick and thick withdrawn.
 The lightnings here and there to left Then in a moment when they blazed
 and right again
 Struck, till the dry old trunks about Opening, I saw the least of little stars
 us, dead, Down on the waste, and straight
 Yea, rotten with a hundred years of beyond the star
 death, I saw the spiritual city and all her
 Sprang into fire : and at the base we spires
 found And gateways in a glory like one
 On either hand, as far as eye could pearl— [saints—
 see, No larger, tho' the goal of all the
 A great black swamp and of an evil Strike from the sea ; and from the
 smell, star there shot
 Part black, part whiten'd with the A rose-red sparkle to the city, and
 bones of men, there
 Not to be crost, save that some Dwelt, and I knew it was the Holy
 ancient king Grail,
 Had built a way, where, link'd with Which never eyes on earth again
 many a bridge, shall see.
 A thousand piers ran into the great Then fell the floods of heaven drown-
 Sea. ing the deep.
 And Galahad fled along them bridge And how my feet recross'd the death-
 by bridge, ful ridge
 And every bridge as quickly as he No memory in me lives ; but that I
 crost touch'd
 Sprang into fire and vanish'd, tho' I The chapel-doors at dawn I know ;
 yeam'd and thence
 To follow ; and thrice above him all Taking my war-horse from the holy
 the heavens man,
 Open'd and blazed with thunder such Glad that no phantom vexed me more,
 as seem'd return'd
 Shoutings of all the sons of God : and To whence I came, the gate of Arthur's
 first wars."
 At once I saw him far on the great " O brother," ask'd Ambrosius,—
 Sea, " for in sooth
 In silver shining armour starry-clear ;

These ancient books—and they would
 win thee—teem,
 Only I find not there this Holy Grail,
 With miracles and marvels like to
 these,
 Not all unlike ; which oftentime I
 read,
 Who read but on my breviary with
 ease,
 Till my head swims ; and then go
 forth and pass
 Down to the little thorpe that lies so
 close,
 And almost plaster'd like a martin's
 nest
 To these old walls—and mingle with
 our folk ;
 And knowing every honest face of
 theirs,
 As well as ever shepherd knew his
 sheep,
 And every homely secret in their
 hearts,
 Delight myself with gossip and old
 wives,
 And ills and aches, and teethings,
 lyings-in,
 And mirthful sayings, children of the
 place,
 That have no meaning half a league
 away :
 Or lulling random squabbles when
 they rise,
 Chafferings and chatterings at the
 market-cross,
 Rejoice, small man, in this small
 world of mine,
 Yea, even in their hens and in their
 eggs—
 O brother, saying this Sir Galahad
 Came ye on none but phantoms in
 your quest,
 No man, no woman ? "

Then, Sir Percivale :

" All men, to one so bound by such a
 vow,
 And women were as phantoms. O,
 my brother,
 Why wilt thou shame me to confess to
 thee
 How far I falter'd from my quest and
 vow ?
 For after I had lain so many nights

A bedmate of the snail and eft and
 snake,
 In grass and burdock, I was chang'd
 to wan
 And meagre, and the vision had not
 come ;
 And then I chanced upon a goodly
 town
 With one great dwelling in the middle
 of it ;
 Thither I made, and there was I
 disarm'd
 By maidens each as fair as any flower ;
 But when they led me into hall, be-
 hold
 The Princess of that castle was the
 one,
 Brother, and that one only, who had
 ever
 Made my heart leap ; for when I
 moved of old
 A slender page about her father's hall,
 And she a slender maiden, all my
 heart
 Went after her with longing : yet we
 twain [vow]
 Had never kiss'd a kiss, or vow'd a
 And now I came upon her once again,
 And one had wedded her, and he was
 dead,
 And all his land and wealth and state
 were hers.
 And while I tarried, every day she
 set
 A banquet richer than the day before
 By me ; for all her longing and her
 will
 Was toward me as of old ; till one
 fair morn,
 I walking to and fro beside a stream
 That flash'd across her orchard under-
 neath
 Her castle-walls, she stole upon my
 walk,
 And calling me the greatest of all
 knights,
 Embraced me, and so kiss'd me the
 first time,
 And gave herself and all her wealth
 to me.
 Then I remember'd Arthur's warning
 word,
 That most of us would follow wander-
 ing fires,

And the Quest faded in my heart. But live like an old badger in his
 Anon, earth,
 The heads of all her people drew to With earth about him everywhere,
 me, despite
 With supplication both of knees and All fast and penance. Saw ye none
 tongue : beside,
 ' We have heard of thee : thou art None of your knights ? "

our greatest knight, " Yea so," said Percivale :
 Our Lady says it, and we well believe : " One night my pathway swerving
 Wed thou our Lady, and rule over us, east, I saw
 And thou shalt be as Arthur in our The pelican on the casque of our Sir
 land.' Bors
 O me, my brother ! but one night All in the middle of the rising moon :
 my vow And toward him spurr'd and hail'd
 Burnt me within, so that I rose and him, and he me,
 fled, And each made joy of either ; then
 But wail'd and wept, and hated mine he ask'd,
 own self, ' Where is he ? hast thou seen him—
 And ev'n the Holy Quest, and all but Lancelot ? ' ' Once,'
 her ; Said good Sir Bors, ' he dash'd across
 Then after I was join'd with Galahad me—mad,
 Cared not for her, nor anything upon And maddening what he rode : and
 earth." when I cried,

Then said the monk, " Poor men, " Rides thou then so hotly on a quest
 when yule is cold, So holy ? " Lancelot shouted, " Stay
 Must be content to sit by little fires. me not !
 And this am I, so that ye care for me I have been the sluggard, and I ride
 Ever so little ; yea, and blest be apace,
 Heaven For now there is a lion in the way." So vanish'd.'

That brought thee here to this poor " Then Sir Bors had ridden on
 house of ours, Softly, and sorrowing for our Lancelot,
 Where all the brethren are so hard, Because his former madness, once
 to warm the talk
 My cold heart with a friend : but O And scandal of our table, had re-
 the pity turn'd ;
 To find thine own first love once more For Lancelot's kith and kin so wor-
 —to hold, ship him
 Hold her a wealthy bride within thine That ill to him is ill to them ; to Bors
 arms, Beyond the rest : he well had been
 Or all but hold, and then—cast her content
 aside, Not to have seen, so Lancelot might
 Foregoing all her sweetness, like a have seen,
 weed, The Holy Cup of healing ; and,
 For we that want the warmth of indeed,
 double life, Being so clouded with his grief and
 We that are plagued with dreams of love,
 something sweet Small heart was his after the Holy
 Beyond all sweetness in a life so Quest :
 rich,— If God would send the vision, well :
 Ah ! blessed Lord, I speak too earthly- if not,
 wise, The Quest and he were in the hands
 Seeing I never stray'd beyond the of heaven.
 cell,

" And then, with small adventure
 met, Sir Bors
 Rode to the lonest tract of all the
 realm,
 And found a people there among their
 crags,
 Our race and blood, a remnant that
 were left
 Paynim amid their circles, and the
 stones
 They pitch up straight to heaven :
 and their wise men
 Were strong in that old magic which
 can trace
 The wandering of the stars, and
 scoff'd at him
 And this high Quest as at a simple
 thing :
 Told him he follow'd — almost
 Arthur's words—
 A mocking fire : ' what other fire
 than he,
 Whereby the blood beats, and the
 blossom blows,
 And the sea rolls, and all the world
 is warm'd ? '
 And when his answer chafed them,
 the rough crowd, [priests,
 Hearing he had a difference with their
 Seized him, and bound and plunged
 him into a cell
 Of great piled stones ; and lying
 bounden there
 In darkness thro' innumerable hours
 He heard the hollow-ringing heavens
 sweep
 Over him, till by miracle—what
 else ?—
 Heavy as it was, a great stone slipt
 and fell,
 Such as no wind could move : and
 thro' the gap
 Glimmer'd the streaming scud : then
 came a night
 Still as the day was loud ; and thro'
 the gap
 The seven clear stars of Arthur's
 Table Round—
 For, brother, so one night, because
 they roll
 Thro' such a round in heaven, we
 named the stars,
 Rejoicing in ourselves and in our
 king—

And these, like bright eyes of familiar
 friends,
 In on him shone, ' And then to me, to
 me,'
 Said good Sir Bors, ' beyond all hopes
 of mine,
 Who scarce had pray'd or ask'd it for
 myself—
 Across the seven clear stars—O grace
 to me—
 In colour like the fingers of a hand
 Before a burning taper, the sweet
 Grail [peal'd
 Glided and past, and close upon it
 A sharp quick thunder.' Afterwards
 a maid,
 Who kept our holy faith among her
 kin
 In secret, entering, loosed and let
 him go."

To whom the monk : " And I
 remember now
 That pelican on the casque : Sir Bors
 it was
 Who spake so low and sadly at our
 board ;
 And mighty reverent at our grace was
 he :
 A square-set man and honest ; and
 his eyes,
 An out-door sign of all the warmth
 within,
 Smiled with his lips—a smile beneath
 a cloud,
 But heaven had meant it for a sunny
 one :
 Ay, ay, Sir Bors, who else ? But
 when ye reach'd
 The city, found ye all your knights
 return'd,
 Or was there sooth in Arthur's pro-
 phecy,
 Tell me, and what said each, and
 what the King ? "

Then answer'd Percivale : " And
 that can I,
 Brother, and truly ; since the living
 words
 Of so great men as Lancelot and
 our King
 Pass not from door to door and out
 again,

But sit within the house. O, when
we reach'd
The city, our horses stumbling as they
trode
On heaps of ruin, hornless unicorns,
Crack'd basilisks, and splinter'd
rockatrices,
And shatter'd talbots, which had left
the stones
Raw, that they fell from, brought us
to the hall.

"And there sat Arthur on the dais-
throne,
And those that had gone out upon the
Quest,
Wasted and worn, and but a tithe of
them,
And those that had not, stood before
the King.
Who, when he saw me, rose, and bade
me hail,
Saying, 'A welfare in thine eye re-
proves
Our fear of some disastrous chance
for thee
On hill, or plain, at sea, or flooding
ford.
So fierce a gale made havock here of
late
Among the strange devices of our
kings;
Yea, shook this newer, stronger hall
of ours,
And from the statue Merlin moulded
for us
Half-wrench'd a golden wing; but
now—the quest,
This vision—hast thou seen the Holy
Cup,
That Joseph brought of old to
Glastonbury?'

"So when I told him all thyself
hast heard,
Ambrosius, and my fresh but fixt
resolve
To pass away into the quiet life,
He answer'd not, but, sharply turn-
ing, ask'd
Of Gawain, 'Gawain, was this Quest
for thee?'

"'Nay, lord,' said Gawain, 'not
for such as I,

Therefore I communed with a saintly
man,
Who made me sure the Quest was not
for me;
For I was much aweared of the
Quest:
But found a silk pavilion in a field,
And merry maidens in it; and then
this gale
Tore my pavilion from the tenting-
pin,
And blew my merry maidens all
about
With all discomfort; yea, and but
for this,
My twelvemonth and a day were
pleasant to me.'

"He ceased; and Arthur turn'd
to whom at first
He saw not, for Sir Bors, on entering,
push'd
Athwart the throng to Lancelot,
caught his hand,
Held it, and there, half-hidden by
him, stood,
Until the King espied him, saying to
him,
'Hail, Bors! if ever loyal man and
true
Could see it, thou hast seen the
Grail'; and Bors,
'Ask me not, for I may not speak of
it,
I saw it': and the tears were in his
eyes.

"Then there remain'd but Lancelot,
for the rest
Spake but of sundry perils in the
storm;
Perhaps, like him of Cana in Holy
Writ,
Our Arthur kept his best until the
last;
'Thou, too, my Lancelot,' ask'd the
King, 'my friend,
Our mightiest, hath this Quest
avail'd for thee?'

"'Our mightiest!' answer'd
Lancelot, with a groan;
'O King!'—and when he paused,
methought I spied
A dying fire of madness in his eyes—

' O King, my friend, if friend of thine I be,
 Happier are those that welter in their sin,
 Swine in the mud, that cannot see for slime,
 Slime of the ditch : but in me lived a sin
 So strange, of such a kind, that all of pure,
 Noble, and knightly in me twined and clung
 Round that one sin, until the whole-some flower
 And poisonous grew together, each as each,
 Not to be pluck'd asunder ; and when thy knights
 Sware, I sware with them only in the hope [Grail
 That could I touch or see the Holy They might be pluck'd asunder.
 Then I spake
 To one most holy saint, who wept and said,
 That save they could be pluck'd asunder, all
 My quest were but in vain ; to whom I vow'd
 That I would work according as he will'd.
 And forth I went, and while I yearn'd and strove
 To tear the twain asunder in my heart,
 My madness came upon me as of old,
 And whipt me into waste fields far away ;
 There was I beaten down by little men,
 Mean knights, to whom the moving of my sword
 And shadow of my spear had been enow
 To scare them from me once ; and then I came
 All in my folly to the naked shore,
 Wide flats, where nothing but coarse grasses grew ;
 But such a blast, my King, began to blow,
 So loud a blast along the shore and sea,
 Ye could not hear the waters for the blast,
 Tho' heapt in mounds and ridges all the sea
 Drove like a cataract, and all the sand
 Swept like a river, and the clouded heavens
 Were shaken with the motion and the sound.
 And blackening in the sea-foam sway'd a boat,
 Half-swallow'd in it, anchor'd with a chain ;
 And in my madness to myself I said,
 " I will embark and I will lose myself,
 And in the great sea wash away my sin."
 burst the chain, I sprang into the boat.
 Seven days I drove along the dreary deep,
 And with me drove the moon and all the stars ;
 And the wind fell, and on the seventh night
 I heard the shingle grinding in the surge,
 And felt the boat shock earth, and looking up,
 Behold, the enchanted towers of Carbonek,
 A castle like a rock upon a rock,
 With chasm-like portals open to the sea,
 And steps that met the breaker ! there was none
 Stood near it but a lion on each side
 That kept the entry, and the moon was full.
 Then from the boat I leapt, and up the stairs.
 There drew my sword. With sudden-flaring manes
 Those two great beasts rose upright like a man,
 Each gript a shoulder, and I stood between ;
 And, when I would have smitten them, heard a voice,
 " Doubt not, go forward ; if thou doubt, the beasts
 Will tear thee piecemeal." Then with violence
 The sword was dash'd from out my hand, and fell.

And up into the sounding hall I past ;
 But nothing in the sounding hall I
 saw,
 No bench nor table, painting on the
 wall,
 Or shield of knight ; only the rounded
 moon
 Thro' the tall oriel on the rolling sea.
 But always in the quiet house I
 heard,
 Clear as a lark, high o'er me as a lark,
 A sweet voice singing in the topmost
 tower
 To the eastward : up I climb'd a
 thousand steps
 With pain : as in a dream I seem'd to
 climb
 For ever : at the last I reach'd a door,
 A light was in the crannies, and I
 heard,
 " Glory and joy and honour to our
 Lord
 And to the Holy Vessel of the Grail."
 Then in my madness I essay'd the
 door ;
 It gave ; and thro' a stormy glare, a
 heat
 As from a seventimes-heated furnace,
 I,
 Blasted and burnt, and blinded as I
 was,
 With such a fierceness that I swoon'd
 away—
 O, yet methought I saw the Holy
 Grail,
 All pall'd in crimson samite, and
 around
 Great angels, awful shapes, and wings
 and eyes.
 And but for all my madness and my
 sin,
 And then my swooning, I had sworn
 I saw
 That which I saw ; but what I saw
 was veil'd
 And cover'd ; and this quest was not
 for me.'

" So speaking, and here ceasing,
 Lancelot left
 The hall long silent, till Sir Gawain—
 nay,
 Brother, I need not tell thee foolish
 words,—

A reckless and irreverent knight was
 he,
 Now bolden'd by the silence of his
 King,—
 Well, I will tell thee : ' O king, my
 liege,' he said,
 ' Hath Gawain fail'd in any quest of
 thine ?
 When have I stinted stroke in
 foughten field ?
 But as for thine, my good friend,
 Percivale,
 Thy holy nun and thou have driven
 men mad,
 Yea, made our mightiest madder
 than our least.
 But by mine eyes and by mine ears I
 swear,
 I will be deafar than the blue-eyed
 cat,
 And thrice as blind as any noonday
 owl,
 To holy virgins in their ecstasies,
 Henceforward.'

" ' Deafar,' said the blameless
 King,
 ' Gawain, and blinder unto holy
 things
 Hope not to make thyself by idle
 vows,
 Being too blind to have desire to see.
 But if indeed there came a sign from
 heaven,
 Blessed are Bors, Lancelot and Perci-
 vale,
 For these have seen according to
 their sight.
 For every fiery prophet in old times,
 And all the sacred madness of the
 bard,
 When God made music thro' them,
 could but speak
 His music by the framework and the
 chord ;
 And as ye saw it ye have spoken
 truth.

" ' Nay—but thou errest, Lancelot :
 never yet
 Could all of true and noble in knight
 and man
 Twine round one sin, whatever it
 might be,

With such a closeness, but apart " " And some among you held, that
 there grew, if the King
 Save that he were the swine thou Had seen the sight he would have
 spakest of, sworn the vow ;
 Some root of knighthood and pure Not easily, seeing that the King must
 nobleness ; guard
 Whereto see thou, that it may bear That which he rules, and is but as
 its flower. the hind

 " " And spake I not too truly, O
 my knights ?
 Was I too dark a prophet when I said
 To those who went upon the Holy
 Quest,
 That most of them would follow
 wandering fires,
 Lost in the quagmire ?—lost to me
 and gone,
 And left me gazing at a barren board,
 And a lean Order—scarce return'd
 a tithe—
 And out of those to whom the vision
 came
 My greatest hardly will believe he
 saw ;
 Another hath beheld it afar off,
 And leaving human wrongs to right
 themselves,
 Cares but to pass into the silent life.
 And one hath had the vision face to
 face,
 And now his chair desires him here in
 vain,
 However they may crown him other-
 where,

To whom a space of land is given to
 plough,
 Who may not wander from the
 allotted field,
 Before his work be done ; but, being
 done,
 Let visions of the night or of the day
 Come, as they will ; and many a time
 they come,
 Until this earth he walks on seems not
 earth,
 This light that strikes his eyeball is
 not light, [not air
 This air that smites his forehead is
 But vision—yea, his very hand and
 foot—
 In moments when he feels he cannot
 die,
 And knows himself no vision to
 himself,
 Nor the high God a vision, nor that
 One
 Who rose again : ye have seen what
 ye have seen."

 " So spake the king : I knew not
 all he meant."

PELLEAS AND ETTARRE

KING ARTHUR made new knights to fill the gap
 Left by the Holy Quest ; and as he sat
 In hall at old Caerleon, the high doors
 Were softly sunder'd, and thro' these
 a youth,
 Pelleas, and the sweet smell of the
 fields
 Past, and the sunshine came along
 with him.

" Make me thy knight, because I
 know, Sir King,
 All that belongs to knighthood, and I
 love,"
 Such was his cry ; for having heard
 the King
 Had let proclaim a tournament—the
 prize
 A golden circlet and a knightly sword,
 Full fain had Pelleas for his lady won
 The golden circlet, for himself the
 sword :
 And there were those who knew him
 near the King
 And promised for him : and Arthur
 made him knight.

And this new knight, Sir Pelleas of
 the isles—
 But lately come to his inheritance,
 And lord of many a barren isle was
 he—
 Riding at noon, a day or twain before,
 Across the forest call'd of Dean, to
 find
 Caerleon and the King, had felt the
 sun
 Beat like a strong knight on his helm,
 and reel'd
 Almost to falling from his horse ;
 but saw
 Near him a mound of even-sloping
 side,
 Whereon a hundred stately beeches
 grew,

And here and there great hollies under
 them.
 But for a mile all round was open
 space,
 And fern and heath : and slowly
 Pelleas drew
 To that dim day, then binding his
 good horse
 To a tree, cast himself down ; and as
 he lay
 At random looking over the brown
 earth
 Thro' that green-glooming twilight
 of the grove,
 It seem'd to Pelleas that the fern
 without
 Burnt as a living fire of emeralds,
 So that his eyes were dazzled looking
 at it.
 Then o'er it crost the dimness of a
 cloud
 Floating, and once the shadow of a
 bird
 Flying, and then a fawn ; and his
 eyes closed.
 And since he loved all maidens, but
 no maid
 In special, half-awake he whisper'd,
 " Where ?
 O where ? I love thee, tho' I know
 thee not. [vere,
 For fair thou art and pure as Guine-
 And I will make thee with my spear
 and sword
 As famous—O my queen, my Guine-
 vere,
 For I will be thine Arthur when we
 meet."

Suddenly waken'd with a sound of
 talk
 And laughter at the limit of the wood,
 And glancing thro' the hoary boles,
 he saw,
 Strange as to some old prophet might
 have seem'd

A vision hovering on a sea of fire,
 Damsels in divers colours like the
 cloud
 Of sunset and sunrise, and all of them
 On horses, and the horses richly
 trapt
 Breast-high in that bright line of
 bracken stood :
 And all the damsels talk'd confusedly,
 And one was pointing this way, and
 one that,
 Because the way was lost.

 And Pelleas rose,
 And loosed his horse, and led him to
 the light.
 There she that seem'd the chief
 among them said,
 " In happy time behold our pilot-
 star !
 Youth, we are damsels-errant, and we
 ride,
 Arm'd as ye see, to tilt against the
 knights
 There at Caerleon, but have lost our
 way :
 To right ? to left ? straightforward ?
 back again ?
 Which ? tell us quickly."

 And Pelleas gazing thought,
 " Is Guinevere herself so beautiful ? "
 For large her violet eyes look'd, and
 her bloom
 A rosy dawn kindled in stainless
 heavens,
 And round her limbs, mature in
 womanhood,
 And slender was her hand and small
 her shape,
 And but for those large eyes, the
 haunts of scorn,
 She might have seem'd a toy to trifle
 with,
 And pass and care no more. But
 while he gazed
 The beauty of her flesh abash'd the
 boy,
 As tho' it were the beauty of her soul :
 For as the base man, judging of the
 good,
 Puts his own baseness in him by
 default
 Of will and nature, so did Pelleas
 lend

All the young beauty of his own soul
 to hers,
 Believing her ; and when she spake
 to him,
 Stammer'd, and could not make her
 a reply.
 For out of the waste islands had he
 come,
 Where saving his own sisters he had
 known
 Scarce any but the women of his
 isles,
 Rough wives, that laugh'd and
 scream'd against the gulls,
 Makers of nets, and living from the
 sea.

 Then with a slow smile turn'd the
 lady round
 And look'd upon her people ; and as
 when
 A stone is flung into some sleeping
 tarn,
 The circle widens till it lip the marge,
 Spread the slow smile thro' all her
 company.
 Three knights were there among ;
 and they too smiled,
 Scorning him ; for the lady was
 Ettarre,
 And she was a great lady in her land.

 Again she said, " O wild and of the
 woods,
 Knowest thou not the fashion of our
 speech ?
 Or have the Heavens but given thee a
 fair face,
 Lacking a tongue ? "

 " O damsel," answer'd he,
 " I woke from dreams ; and coming
 out of gloom
 Was dazzled by the sudden light, and
 crave
 Pardon : but will ye to Caerleon ? I
 Go likewise : shall I lead you to the
 King ?

 " Lead then," she said ; and thro'
 the woods they went.
 And while they rode, the meaning
 in his eyes,
 His tenderness of manner, and chaste

His broken utterances and bashful-
ness,
Were all a burthen to her, and in her
heart
She mutter'd, " I have lighted on a
fool,
Raw, yet so stale ! " But since her
mind was bent
On hearing, after trumpet blown, her
name
And title, " Queen of Beauty," in the
lists
Cried—and beholding him so strong,
she thought
That peradventure he will fight for
me,
And win the circlet: therefore
flatter'd him,
Being so gracious, that he well-nigh
deem'd
His wish by hers was echo'd ; and her
knights
And all her damsels, too, were gracious
to him,
For she was a great lady.

And when they reach'd
Caerleon, ere they past to lodging,
she,
Taking his hand, " O the strong
hand," she said,
" See ! look at mine ! but wilt thou
fight for me,
And win me this fine circlet, Pelleas,
That I may love thee ? "

Then his helpless heart
Leapt, and he cried " Ay ! wilt thou
if I win ? "
" Ay, that will I," she answer'd, and
she laugh'd,
And straitly nipt the hand, and flung
it from her ;
Then glanced askew at those three
knights of hers,
Till all her ladies laugh'd along with
her.

" O happy world," thought Pelleas,
" all, meseems,
Are happy ; I the happiest of them
all."
Nor slept that night for pleasure in
his blood,

And green wood-ways, and eyes
among the leaves ;
Then being on the morrow knighted,
sware
To love one only. And as he came
away,
The men who met him rounded on
their heels
And wonder'd after him, because
his face
Shone like the countenance of a priest
of old
Against the flame about a sacrifice
Kindled by fire from heaven: so
glad was he.

Then Arthur made vast banquets,
and strange knights
From the four winds came in: and
each one sat,
Tho' served with choice from air,
land, stream, and sea,
Oft in mid-banquet measuring with
his eyes
His neighbour's make and might:
and Pelleas look'd
Noble among the noble, for he
dream'd
His lady loved him, and he knew
himself
Loved of the King: and him his new-
made knight
Worshipt, whose lightest whisper
moved him more
Than all the ranged reasons of the
world.

Then blush'd and brake the morn-
ing of the jousts,
And this was call'd " The Tourna-
ment of Youth":
For Arthur, loving his young knight,
withheld
His older and his mightier from the
lists,
That Pelleas might obtain his lady's
love,
According to her promise, and remain
Lord of the tourney. And Arthur
had the jousts
Down in the flat field by the shore of
Usk
Holden: the gilded parapets were
crown'd

With faces, and the great tower fill'd
with eyces
Up to the summit, and the trumpets
blew.
There all day long Sir Pelleas kept
the field
With honour : so by that strong hand
of his
The sword and golden circlet were
achieved.

Then rang the shout his lady
loved : the heat
Of pride and glory fired her face ; her
eye
Sparkled ; she caught the circlet
from his lance,
And there before the people crown'd
herself :
So for the last time she was gracious
to him.

Then at Caerleon for a space—her
look
Bright for all others, cloudier on her
knight—
Linger'd Ettarre : and seeing Pelleas
droop,
Said Guinevere, " We marvel at thee
much,
O damsel, wearing this unsunny face
To him who won thee glory ! " And
she said,
" Had ye not held your Lancelot in
your bower,
My Queen, he had not won." Where-
at the Queen,
As one whose foot is bitten by an ant,
Glanced down upon her, turn'd and
went her way.

But after, when her damsels, and
herself,
And those three knights all set their
faces home,
Sir Pelleas follow'd. She that saw
him cried,
" Damsels—and yet I should be
shamed to say it—
I cannot bide Sir Baby. Keep him
back
Among yourselves. Would rather
that we had
Some rough old knight who knew the
worldly way,

Albeit grizzlier than a bear, to ride
And jest with : take him to you, keep
him off,
And pamper him with papmeat, if ye
will,
Old milky fables of the wolf and
sheep,
Such as the wholesome mothers tell
their boys.
Nay, should ye try him with a merry
one

To find his mettle, good : and if he
fly us,
Small matter ! let him." This her
damsels heard,
And mindful of her small and cruel
hand,
They, closing round him thro' the
journey home,
Acted her hest, and always from her
side

Restrain'd him with all manner of
device,
So that he could not come to speech
with her.

And when she gain'd her castle,
upsprang the bridge,
Down rang the grate of iron thro' the
groove,
And he was left alone in open field.

" These be the ways of ladies,"
Pelleas thought,
" To those who love them, trials of our
faith.

Yea, let her prove me to the utter-
most,
For loyal to the uttermost am I,"
So made his moan ; and, darkness
falling, sought
A priory not far off, there lodged, but
rose

With morning every day, and, moist
or dry,
Full-arm'd upon his charger all day
long
Sat by the walls, and no one open'd
to him.

And this persistence turn'd her
scorn to wrath.

Then calling her three knights, she
charged them, " Out !
And drive him from the walls." And
out they came,

But Pelleas overthrew them as they dash'd
Against him one by one; and these return'd,
But still he kept his watch beneath the wall.

Thereon her wrath became a hate;
and once,
A week beyond, while walking on the walls
With her three knights, she pointed downward, "Look,
He haunts me—I cannot breathe—besieges me;
Down! strike him! put my hate into your strokes,
And drive him from my walls." And down they went,
And Pelleas overthrew them one by one;
And from the tower above him cried Ettarre,
"Bind him, and bring him in."

He heard her voice;
Then let the strong hand, which had overthrown
Her minion-knights, by those he overthrew
Be bounden straight, and so they brought him in.

Then when he came before Ettarre, the sight
Of her rich beauty made him at one glance
More bondsman in his heart than in his bonds.
Yet with good cheer he spake, "Behold me, Lady,
A prisoner, and the vassal of thy will;
And if thou keep me in thy donjon here,
Content am I so that I see thy face
But once a day: for I have sworn my vows,
And thou hast given thy promise, and I know
That all these pains are trials of my faith,
And that thyself when thou hast seen me strain'd

And sifted to the utmost, wilt at length
Yield me thy love and know me for thy knight."

Then she began to rail so bitterly,
With all her damsels, he was stricken mute;
But when she mock'd his vows and the great King,
Lighted on words: "For pity of thine own self,
Peace, Lady, peace: is he not thine and mine?"
"Thou fool," she said, "I never heard his voice
But long'd to break away. Unbind him now,
And thrust him out of doors; for save he be
Fool to the midmost marrow of his bones,
He will return no more." And those, her three,
Laugh'd, and unbound, and thrust him from the gate.

And after this, a week beyond, again
She call'd them, saying, "There he watches yet,
There like a dog before his master's door!
Kick'd, he returns: do ye not hate him, ye?
Ye know yourselves: how can ye bide at peace,
Affronted with his fulsome innocence?
Are ye but creatures of the board and bed,
No men to strike? Fall on him all at once,
And if ye slay him I reck not: if ye fail,
Give ye the slave mine order to be bound,
Bind him as heretofore, and bring him in:
It may be ye shall slay him in his bonds."

She spake; and at her will they couch'd their spears,
Three against one: and Gawain passing by,

Bound upon solitary adventure, saw
Low down beneath the shadow of
those towers

A villainy, three to one : and thro'
his heart

The fire of honour and all noble deeds
Flash'd, and he call'd, " I strike
upon thy side—

The caitiffs ! " " Nay," said Pelleas,
" but forbear ;

He needs no aid who doth his lady's
will."

So Gawain, looking at the villainy
done,

Forbore, but in his heat and eagerness
Trembled and quiver'd, as the dog,
withheld

A moment from the vermin that he
sees

Before him, shivers, ere he springs,
and kills.

And Pelleas overthrew them, one to
three ;

And they rose up, and bound, and
brought him in.

Then first her anger, leaving Pelleas,
burn'd

Full on her knights in many an evil
name

Of craven, weakling, and thrice-
beaten hound ;

" Yet, take him, ye that scarce are fit
to touch,

Far less to bind, your victor, and
thrust him out,

And let who will release him from his
bonds,

And if he comes again"—there she
brake short ;

And Pelleas answer'd, " Lady, for
indeed

I loved you and I deem'd you beauti-
ful,

I cannot brook to see your beauty
marr'd

Thro' evil spite : and if ye love me
not,

I cannot bear to dream you so for-
sworn :

I had liefer ye were worthy of my
love,

Than to be loved again of you—
farewell ;

And tho' ye kill my hope, not yet ray
love,

Vex not yourself : ye will not see me
more."

While thus he spake, she gazed
upon the man

Of princely bearing, tho' in bonds,
and thought,

" Why have I push'd him from me ?
this man loves,

If love there be : yet him I loved not.
Why ?

I deem'd him fool ? yea, so ? or that
in him

A something—was it nobler than
myself ?—

Seem'd my reproach ? He is not of
my kind.

He could not love me, did he know
me well.

Nay, let him go—and quickly." And
her knights

Laugh'd not, but thrust him bounden
out of door.

Forth sprang Gawain, and loosed
him from his bonds,

And flung them o'er the walls ; and
afterward,

Shaking his hands, as from a lazar's
rag,

" Faith of my body," he said, " and
art thou not—

Yea thou art he, whom late our
Arthur made

Knight of his table ; yea and he that
won

The circlet ? wherefore hast thou so
defamed

Thy brotherhood in me and all the
rest,

As let these caitiffs on thee work their
will ? "

And Pelleas answer'd, " O, their
wills are hers

For whom I won the circlet ; and
mine, hers,

Thus to be bounden, so to see her
face,

Marr'd tho' it be with spite and
mockery now,

Other than when I found her in the
woods ;

And tho' she hath me bounden but
 in spite,
 And all to flout me, when they bring
 me in,
 Let me be bounden, I shall see her
 face ;
 Else must I die thro' mine unhappi-
 ness."

And Gawain answer'd kindly tho'
 in scorn,
 " Why, let my lady bind me if she
 will,
 And let my lady beat me if she will :
 But an she send her delegate to thrall
 These fighting hands of mine—Christ
 kill me then
 But I will slice him handless by the
 wrist,
 And let my lady sear the stump for
 him,
 Howl as he may. But hold me for
 your friend :
 Come, ye know nothing : here I
 pledge my troth,
 Yea, by the honour of the Table
 Round,
 I will be leal to thee and work thy
 work,
 And tame thy jailing princess to thine
 hand.
 Lend me thine horse and arms, and I
 will say
 That I have slain thee. She will let
 me in
 To hear the manner of thy fight and
 fall ;
 Then, when I come within her coun-
 sels, then
 From prime to vespers will I chant
 thy praise
 As prowtest knight and truest lover,
 more
 Than any have sung thee living, till
 she long
 To have thee back in lusty life again,
 Not to be bound, save by white bonds
 and warm,
 Dearer than freedom. Wherefore
 now thy horse
 And armour : let me go : be com-
 forted :
 Give me three days to melt her fancy,
 and hope

The third night hence will bring thee
 news of gold."

Then Pelleas lent his horse and all
 his arms,
 Saving the goodly sword, his prize,
 and took
 Gawain's, and said " Betray me not,
 but help—
 Art thou not he whom men call
 light-of-love ? "

" Ay," said Gawain, " for
 women be so light,"
 Then bounded forward to the castle
 walls,
 And raised a bugle hanging from his
 neck,
 And winded it, and that so musically
 That all the old echoes hidden in the
 wall
 Rang out like hollow woods at
 huntingtide.

Up ran a score of damsels to the
 tower ;
 " Avaunt," they cried, " our lady
 loves thee not."
 But Gawain lifting up his visor said,
 " Gawain am I, Gawain of Arthur's
 court,
 And I have slain this Pelleas whom ye
 hate :
 Behold his horse and armour. Open
 And I will make you merry."

And down they ran,
 Her damsels, crying to their lady,
 " Lo !
 Pelleas is dead—he told us—he that
 hath
 His horse and armour : will ye let
 him in ?
 He slew him ! Gawain, Gawain of the
 court,
 Sir Gawain—there he waits below
 the wall,
 Blowing his bugle as who should say
 him nay."

And so, leave given, straight on
 thro' open door
 Rode Gawain, whom she greeted
 courteously.

"Dead, is it so?" she ask'd. "Ay, Red after revel, droned her lurdane
ay," said he, knights
"And oft in dying cried upon your Slumbering, and their three squires
name." across their feet:
"Pity on him," she answer'd, "a In one, their malice on the placid
good knight, lip
But never let me bide one hour at Froz'n by sweet sleep, four of her
peace." damsels lay:
"Ay," thought Gawain, "and ye be And in the third, the circlet of the
fair cnow: jousts
But I to your dead man have given Bound on her brow, were Gawain and
my troth, Ettarre.
That whom ye loathe him will I make
you love."

So those three days, aimless about
the land,
Lost in a doubt, Pelleas wandering
Waited, until the third night brought
a moon
With promise of large light on woods
and ways.

The night was hot: he could not
rest, but rode
Ere midnight to her walls, and bound
his horse
Hard by the gates. Wide open were
the gates,
And no watch kept; and in thro'
these he past,
And heard but his own steps, and his
own heart [own self,
Beating, for nothing moved but his
And his own shadow. Then he crost
the court,
And saw the postern portal also wide
Yawning; and up a slope of garden,
all
Of roses white and red, and wild
ones mixt
And overgrowing them, went on, and
found,
Here, too, all hush'd below the
mellow moon,
Save that one rivulet from a tiny cave
Came lightening downward, and so
spilt itself
Among the roses, and was lost again.

Then was he ware that white
pavilions rose,
Three from the bushes, gilden-peak:
in one,

Back, as a hand that pushes thro'
the leaf
To find a nest and feels a snake, ne
drew:
Back, as a coward slinks from what he
fears [hound
To cope with, or a traitor proven, or
Beaten, did Pelleas in an utter shame
Creep with his shadow thro' the
court again,
Fingering at his sword-handle until
he stood
There on the castle-bridge once more,
and thought,
"I will go back, and slay them
where they lie."

And so went back and seeing them
yet in sleep
Said, "Ye, that so dishallow the holy
sleep,
Your sleep is death," and drew the
sword, and thought,
"What! slay a sleeping knight?
the King hath bound
And sworn me to this brotherhood";
again,
"Alas that ever a knight should be
so false."
Then turn'd, and so return'd, and
groaning laid
The naked sword athwart their
naked throats,
There left it, and them sleeping; and
she lay,
The circlet of the tourney round her
brows,
And the sword of the tourney across
her throat.
And forth he past, and mounting
on his horse

Stared at her towers that, larger than I never loved her, I but lusted for
 themselves her—
 In their own darkness, throug'd into Away— "

 the moon. He dash'd the rowel into his horse,
 Then crush'd the saddle with his And bounded forth and vanish'd thro'
 thighs, and clench'd the night.
 His hands, and madden'd with him-
 self and moan'd : Then she, that felt the cold touch
 on her throat,
 ' Would they have risen against Awaking knew the sword, and turn'd
 me in their blood herself
 At the last day? I might have To Gawain : " Liar, for thou hast
 answer'd them not slain
 Even before high God. O towers This Pelleas! here he stood and
 so strong, might have slain
 Huge, solid, would that even while I Me and thyself." And he that tells
 gaze the tale
 The crack of earthquake shivering to Says that her ever-veering fancy
 your base turn'd
 Split you, and Hell burst up your To Pelleas, as the one true knight
 harlot roofs on earth,
 Bellowing, and charr'd you thro' and And only lover ; and thro' her love
 thro' within, her life
 Black as the harlot's heart—hollow Wasted and pined, desiring him in
 as a skull !
 Let the fierce east scream thro' your
 eyelet-holes,
 And whirl the dust of harlots round
 and round
 In dung and nettles ! hiss, snake—I
 saw him there—
 Let the fox bark, let the wolf yell.
 Who yells
 Here in the still sweet summer night,
 but I—
 I, the poor Pelleas whom she call'd
 her fool ?
 Fool, beast—he, she, or I ? myself
 most fool ;
 Beast, too, as lacking human wit—
 disgraced,
 Dishonour'd all for trial of true love—
 Love ?—we be all alike : only the
 king
 Hath made us fools and liars. O
 noble vows !
 O great and sane and simple race of
 brutes
 That own no lust because they have
 no law !
 For why should I have loved her to
 my shame ?
 I loathe her, as I loved her to my
 shame.

Of seasons : hard his eyes ; harder
 his heart
 Seem'd ; but so weary were his limbs,
 that he,
 Gasping, " Of Arthur's hall am I,
 but here,
 Here let me rest and die," cast himself
 down,
 And gulph'd his griefs in inmost
 sleep ; so lay,
 Till shaken by a dream, that Gawain
 fired
 The hall of Merlin, and the morning
 star
 Recl'd in the smoke, brake into flame,
 and fell.

He woke, and being ware of some
 one nigh,
 Sent hands upon him, as to tear him,
 crying
 " False ! and I held thee pure as
 Guinevere."

But Percivale stood near him and
 replied,
 " Am I but false as Guinevere is
 pure ?
 Or art thou mazed with dreams ?
 or being one
 Of our free-spoken Table hast not
 heard
 That Lancelot "—there he check'd
 himself and paused.

Then fared it with Sir Pelleas as
 with one
 Who gets a wound in battle, and the
 sword
 That made it plunges thro' the wound
 again,
 And pricks it deeper : and he shrank
 and wail'd,
 " Is the Queen false ? " and Perci-
 vale was mute.
 " Have any of our Round Table held
 their vows ? "
 And Percivale made answer not a
 word.
 " Is the king true ? " " The king ! "
 said Percivale.
 " Why then let men couple at once
 with wolves.
 What ! art thou mad ? "

But Pelleas, leaping up,
 Ran thro' the doors and vaulted on
 his horse
 And fled : small pity upon his horse
 had he,
 Or on himself, or any, and when he
 met
 A cripple, one that held a hand for
 alms—
 Hunch'd as he was, and like an old
 dwarf-clm
 That turns its back on the salt blast,
 the boy
 Paused not but overrode him, shout-
 ing " False,
 And false with Gawain ! " and so left
 him bruised
 And batter'd, and fled on, and hill
 and wood
 Went over streaming by him till the
 gloom,
 That follows on the turning of the
 world,
 Darken'd the common path : he
 twitch'd the reins,
 And made his beast that better knew
 it, swerve [saw
 Now off it and now on ; but when he
 High up in heaven the hall that
 Merlin built,
 Blackening against the dead-green
 stripes of even,
 " Black nest of rats," he groan'd,
 " ye build too high."

Not long thereafter from the city
 gates
 Issued Sir Lancelot riding airily,
 Warm with a gracious parting from
 the Queen,
 Peace at his heart, and gazing at a
 star
 And marvelling what it was : on
 whom the boy,
 Across the silent seeded meadow-
 grass
 Borne, clash'd : and Lancelot, saying,
 " What name hast thou
 That ridest here so blindly and so
 hard ? "
 " I have no name," he shouted, " a
 scourge am I,
 To lash the treasons of the Table
 Round."

"Yea, but thy name?" "I have many names," he cried :
 "I am wrath and shame and hate and evil fame,
 And like a poisonous wind I pass to blast
 And blaze the crime of Lancelot and the Queen."
 'First over me, said Lancelot, "shalt thou pass,"
 "Fight therefore," yell'd the other, and either knight
 Drew back a space, and when they closed, at once
 The weary steed of Pelleas floundering flung
 His rider, who called out from the dark field,
 "Thou art false as Hell : slay me : I have no sword."
 Then Lancelot, "Yea, between thy lips—and sharp ;
 But here will I disedge it by thy death."
 "Slay then," he shriek'd, "my will is to be slain."
 And Lancelot, with his heel upon the fall'n,
 Rolling his eyes, a moment stood, then spake :
 "Rise, weakling ; I am Lancelot ; say thy say."
 And Lancelot slowly rode his war-horse back
 To Camelot, and Sir Pelleas in brief while
 Caught his unbroken limbs from the dark field,
 And follow'd to the city. It chanced that both
 Brake into hall together, worn and pale.
 There with her knights and dames was Guinevere.
 Full wonderingly she gazed on Lancelot
 So soon return'd, and then on Pelleas, him
 Who had not greeted her, but cast himself
 Down on a bench, hard-breathing.
 "Have ye fought?"
 She ask'd of Lancelot. "Ay, my Queen," he said.
 "And thou hast overthrown him?"
 "Ay, my Queen."
 Then she, turning to Pelleas, "O young knight,
 Hath the great heart of knighthood in thee fail'd
 So far thou canst not bide, unfro-wardly,
 A fall from him?" Then, for he answer'd not,
 "Or hast thou other griefs? If I, the Queen,
 May help them, loose thy tongue, and let me know."
 But Pelleas lifted up an eye so fierce
 She quail'd ; and he, hissing "I have no sword,"
 Sprang from the door into the dark.
 The Queen
 Look'd hard upon her lover, he on her ;
 And each foresaw the dolorous day to be :
 And all talk died, as in a grove all song
 Beneath the shadow of some bird of prey ;
 Then a long silence came upon the hall,
 And Modred thought, "The time is hard at hand."

THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

THAT story which the bold Sir Bedivere,
First made and latest left of all the knights,
Told, when the man was no more than a voice
In the white winter of his age, to those
With whom he dwelt, new faces, other minds.

Before that last weird battle in the west
There came on Arthur sleeping, Gawain kill'd
In Lancelot's war, the ghost of Gawain blown
Along a wandering wind, and past his ear
Went shrilling "Hollow, hollow all delight!
Hail, king! to-morrow thou shalt pass away.
Farewell! there is an isle of rest for thee.
And I am blown along a wandering wind,
And hollow, hollow, hollow all delight."
And fainter onward, like wild birds that change
Their season in the night and wail their way
From cloud to cloud, down the long wind the dream
Shrill'd; but in going mingled with dim cries
Far in the moonlit haze among the hills,
As of some lonely city sack'd by night,
When all is lost, and wife and child with wail
Pass to new lords; and Arthur woke and call'd,

"Who spake? A dream. O light upon the wind,
Thine, Gawain, was the voice—are these dim cries
Thine? or doth all that haunts the waste and wild
Mourn, knowing it will go along with me?"

This heard the bold Sir Bedivere and spake:
"O me, my king, let pass whatever will,
Elves, and the harmless glamour of the field;
But in their stead thy name and glory cling
To all high places like a golden cloud
For ever: but as yet thou shalt not pass.
Light was Gawain in life, and light in death
Is Gawain, for the ghost is as the man;
And care not thou for dreams from him, but rise—
I hear the steps of Modred in the west,
And with him many of thy people, and knights
Once thine, whom thou hast loved, but grosser grown
Than heathen, spitting at their vows and thee.
Right well in heart they know thee for the King.
Arise, go forth and conquer as of old."

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"Far other is this battle in the west
Whereto we move, than when we strove in youth,
And thrust the heathen from the Roman wall,
And shook him thro' the north. Ill doom is mine

To war against my people and my knights.
 The king who fights his people fights himself.
 And they my knights, who loved me once, the stroke
 That strikes them dead is as my death to me.
 Yet let us hence, and find or feel a way
 Thro' this blind haze, which ever since I saw
 One lying in the dust at Almesbury,
 Hath folded in the passes of the world."

Then rose the King and moved his host by night,
 And ever push'd Sir Modred, league by league,
 Back to the sunset bound of Lyonesse—
 A land of old upheaven from the abyss
 By fire, to sink into the abyss again ;
 Where fragments of forgotten peoples dwelt,
 And the long mountains ended in a coast
 Of ever-shifting sand, and far away
 The phantom circle of a moaning sea.
 There the pursuer could pursue no more,
 And he that fled no further fly the King ;
 And there, that day when the great light of heaven [year,
 Burn'd at his lowest in the rolling
 On the waste sand by the waste sea they closed.
 Nor ever yet had Arthur fought a fight
 Like this last, dim, weird battle of the west.
 A deathwhite mist slept over sand and sea ;
 Whereof the chill, to him who breathed it, drew
 Down with his blood, till all his heart was cold
 With formless fear ; and ev'n on Arthur fell
 Confusion, since he saw not whom he fought,

For friend and foe were shadows in the mist,
 And friend slew friend not knowing whom he slew ;
 And some had visions out of golden youth,
 And some beheld the faces of old ghosts
 Look in upon the battle ; and in the mist
 Was many a noble deed, many a base,
 And chance and craft and strength in single fights,
 And ever and anon with host to host
 Shocks, and the splintering spear, the hard mail hewn,
 Shield-breakings, and the clash of brands, the crash
 Of battleaxes on shatter'd helms, and shrieks [down
 After the Christ, of those who falling
 Looked up for heaven, and only saw the mist ;
 And shouts of heathen and the traitor knights,
 Oaths, insult, filth, and monstrous blasphemies,
 Sweat, writhings, anguish, labouring of the lungs
 In that close mist, and cryings for the light,
 Moans of the dying, and voices of the dead.

Last, as by some one deathbed after wail
 Of suffering, silence follows, or thro' death
 Or deathlike swoon, thus over all that shore,
 Save for some whisper of the seething seas,
 A dead hush fell ; but when the dolorous day
 Grew drearier toward twilight falling, came
 A bitter wind, clear from the North, and blew
 The mist aside, and with that wind the tide
 Rose, and the pale king glanced across the field
 Of battle : but no man was moving there ;

Nor any cry of Christian heard
thereon,
Nor yet of heathen; only the wan
wave
Brake in among dead faces, to and
fro
Swaying the helpless hands, and up
and down
Tumbling the hollow helmets, of the
fallen,
And shiver'd brands that once had
fought with Rome,
And rolling far along the gloomy
shores
The voice of days of old and days to
be.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir
Bedivere,
And whiter than the mist that all day
long
Had held the field of battle was the
King:

"Hearest thou this great voice that
shakes the world,
And wastes the narrow realm where-
on we move,
And beats upon the faces of the dead,
My dead, as tho' they had not died
for me?"

O Bedivere, for on my heart hath
fall'n
Confusion, till I know not what I
am,
Nor whence I am, nor whether I be
king.
Behold, I seem but king among the
dead."

Then spake the bold Sir Bedivere:
"My King,
King everywhere! and so the dead
have kings,
There also will I worship thee as
king.
Yet still thy life is whole, and still I
live
Who love thee; but who hates thee,
he that brought
The heathen back among us, yonder
stands,
Modred, unharm'd, the traitor of
thine house."

Then spake the King: "My house
hath been my doom.
But call not thou this traitor of my
house
Who hath but dwelt beneath one roof
with me.
My house are rather they who sware
my vows,
Yea, even while they brake them,
own'd me king.
And well for thee, saying in my dark
hour,
When all the purport of my throne
hath fail'd,
That quick or dead thou holdest me
for king.

King am I, whatsoever be their cry;
And one last act of kinghood shalt
thou see
Yet, ere I pass." And uttering this
the king
Made at the man; then Modred
smote his liege
Hard on that helm which many a
heathen sword
Had beaten thin; while Arthur at
one blow, [bur,
Striking the last stroke with Excali-
Slew him, and all but slain himself, he
fell.

So all day long the noise of battle
roll'd
Among the mountains by the winter
sea;
Until King Arthur's Table, man by
man,
Had fall'n in Lyonesse about their
lord,
King Arthur. Then, because his
wound was deep,
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
And bore him to a chapel nigh the
field,
A broken chancel with a broken
cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren
land:
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was
full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir
Bedivere:

"The sequel of to-day unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous
knights

Whereof this world holds record.

Such a sleep

They sleep—the men I loved. I
think that we

Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of
knightly deeds,

Walking about the gardens and the
halls

Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
I perish by this people which I
made,—

Tho' Merlin sware that I should come
again

To rule once more; but let what
will be, be.

I am so deeply smitten thro' the
helm

That without help I cannot last till
morn.

Thou therefore take my brand Ex-
calibur,

Which was my pride: for thou
rememberest how

In those old days, one summer noon,
an arm

Rose up from out the bosom of the
lake,

Clothed in white samite, mystic,
wonderful,

Holding the sword—and how I row'd
across

And took it, and have worn it, like a
king;

And, wheresoever I am sung or told
In aftertime, this also shall be known:

But now delay not: take Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle
mere:

Watch what thou seest, and lightly
bring me word."

To him replied the bold Sir Bedi-
vere:

"It is not meet, Sir King, to leave
thee thus,

Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the
helm—

A little thing may harm a wounded
man;

Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,

Watch what I see, and lightly bring
thee word."

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine
he stept,

And in the moon athwart the place
of tombs,

Where lay the mighty bones of ancient
men,

Old knights, and over them the sea-
wind sang

Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He,
stepping down

By zig-zag paths, and juts of pointed
rock,

Came on the shining levels of the
lake.

There drew he forth the brand
Excalibur,

And o'er him, drawing it, the winter
moon,

Brightening the skirts of a long cloud,
ran forth

And sparkled keen with frost against
the hilt:

For all the haft twinkled with dia-
mond sparks,

Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-
work

Of subtlest jewelry. He gazed so
long

That both his eyes were dazzled as he
stood,

This way and that dividing the swift
mind,

In act to throw: but at the last it
seem'd

Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd
There in the many-knotted water-
flags,

That whistled stiff and dry about the
marge.

So strode he back slow to the wounded
King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir
Bedivere:

"Hast thou perform'd my mission
which I gave?

What is it thou hast seen? or what
hast heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir
Bedivere !
" I heard the ripple washing in the
reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the
crag."

To whom replied King Arthur,
faint and pale :
" Thou hast betray'd thy nature and
thy name,
Not rendering true answer, as be-
seem'd,
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight :
For surer sign had follow'd, either
hand,
Or voice, or else a motion of the
mere.
This is a shameful thing for men to
lie.
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go
again,
As thou art lief and dear, and do the
thing
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring
me word."

Then went Sir Bedivere the second
time
Across the ridge, and paced beside
the mere,
Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in
thought ; [hilt,
But when he saw the wonder of the
How curiously and strangely chased,
he smote
His palms together, and he cried
aloud :

" And if indeed I cast the brand
away,
Surely a precious thing, one worthy
note,
Should thus be lost for ever from the
earth,
Which might have pleased the eyes of
many men.
What good should follow this, if this
were done ?
What harm, undone ? Deep harm to
disobey,
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.
Were it well to obey then, it a king
demand

An act unprofitable, against himself ?
The King is sick, and knows not
what he does.

What record, or what relic of my lord
Should be to aftertime, but empty
breath

And rumours of a doubt ? But were
this kept,

Stored in some treasure-house of
mighty kings,

Some one might show it at a joust of
arms,

Saying, " King Arthur's sword,
Excalibur,

Wrought by the lonely maiden of the
Lake.

Nine years she wrought it, sitting
in the deeps

Upon the hidden bases of the hills."
So might some old man speak in the
aftertime

To all the people, winning reverence.
But now much honour and much
fame were lost."

To all the people, winning reverence.
But now much honour and much
fame were lost."

So spake he, clouded with his own
conceit,

And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the
wounded King.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing
heavily :

" What is it thou hast seen ? or what
hast heard ? "

And answer made the bold Sir
Bedivere :

" I heard the water lapping on the
crag,

And the long ripple washing in the
reeds."

To whom replied King Arthur,
much in wrath :

" Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted ! Woe
is me ! "

Authority forgets a dying king,
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye
That bow'd the will. I see thee what
thou art,

For thou, the latest-left of all my
knights

In whom should meet the offices of all,

Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt ;
 Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
 Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
 Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
 And the third time may prosper, get thee hence :
 But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
 I will arise and slay thee with my hands."

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
 And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
 Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd the sword,
 And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand
 Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon,
 And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,
 Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
 Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
 By night, with noises of the northern sea. [calibur :
 So flash'd and fell the brand Ex-
 But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
 Clothed in white samite, mystic wonderful,
 And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
 Three times, and drew him under in the mere.
 And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath :
 " Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
 Speak out : what is it thou hast heard, or seen ? "

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :
 " Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems
 Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,

Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
 Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,
 So great a miracle as yonder hilt.
 Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him ;
 But when I look'd again, behold an arm,
 Clothed in white samite, mystic wonderful,
 That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
 Three times, and drew him under in the mere."
 And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard :
 " My end draws nigh ; 'tis time that I were gone.
 Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,
 And bear me to the margin ; yet I fear
 My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die."

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,
 Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
 And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
 As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
 Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,
 And would have spoken, but he found not words ;
 Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,
 O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,
 And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,
 Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed
 When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the King,
 Muttering and murmuring at his ear
 " Quick, quick !
 I fear it is too late, and I shall die."
 But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,

Clothed with his breath, and looking,
 as he walk'd,
 Larger than human on the frozen
 hills.
 He heard the deep behind him, and a
 cry
 Before. His own thought drove him
 like a goad.
 Dry clash'd his harness in the icy
 caves
 And barren chasms, and all to left
 and right
 The bare black cliff clang'd round him,
 as he based
 His feet on juts of slippery crag that
 rang
 Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed
 heels—
 And on a sudden, lo ! the level lake,
 And the long glories of the winter
 moon.

Then saw they how there hove a
 dusky barge,
 Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to
 stern,
 Beneath them ; and descending
 they were ware
 That all the decks were dense with
 stately forms,
 Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a
 dream—by these
 Three Queens with crowns of gold :
 and from them rose
 A cry that shiver'd to the tingling
 stars,
 And, as it were one voice, an agony
 Of lamentation, like a wind that shrills
 All night in a waste land, where no
 one comes.
 Or hath come, since the making of
 the world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, " Place
 me in the barge " ;
 So to the barge they came. There
 those three Queens
 Put forth their hands, and took the
 King, and wept.
 But she, that rose the tallest of them
 all
 And fairest, laid his head upon her
 lap,

And loosed the shatter'd casque, and
 chafed his hands,
 And call'd him by his name, com-
 plaining loud,
 And dropping bitter tears against his
 brow
 Striped with dark blood : for all his
 face was white
 And colourless, and like the wither'd
 moon
 Smote by the fresh beam of the
 springing east ;
 And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd
 with drops
 Of onset ; and the light and lustrous
 curls—
 That made his forehead like a rising
 sun
 High from the daïs-throne—were
 parch'd with dust ;
 Or, clotted into points and hanging
 loose,
 Mix'd with the knightly growth that
 fringed his lips.
 So like a shatter'd column lay the
 King ;
 Not like that Arthur who, with lance
 in rest,
 From spur to plume a star of tourna-
 ment,
 Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and
 charged
 Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir
 Bedivere :
 " Ah ! my Lord Arthur, whither
 shall I go ?
 Where shall I hide my forehead and
 my eyes ?
 For now I see the true old times are
 dead,
 When every morning brought a
 noble chance,
 And every chance brought out a noble
 knight.
 Such times have been not since the
 light that led
 The holy Elders with the gift of
 myrrh.
 But now the whole Round Table is
 dissolved
 Which was an image of the mighty
 world ;

And I, the last, go forth companion-
less,
And the days darken round me, and
the years,
Among new men, strange faces, other
minds."

And slowly answered Arthur from
the barge :
" The old order changeth, yielding
place to new,
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt
the world.
Comfort thyself : what comfort is in
me ?

I have lived my life, and that which
I have done
May He within Himself make pure !
but thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face
again,

Pray for my soul. More things are
wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Where-
fore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and
day.

For what are men better than sheep
or goats [brain,
That nourish a blind life within the
If, knowing God, they lift not hands
of prayer

Both for themselves and those who
call them friend ? [way

For so the whole round earth is every
Bound by gold chains about the feet
of God.

But now farewell. I am going a long
way

With these thou seest—if indeed I go
(For all my mind is clouded with a
doubt)—

To the island-valley of Avilion ;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any
snow,

Nor ever wind blows loudly ; but it
lies

Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with
orchard-lawns

And bowery hollows crown'd with
summer sea,

Where I will heal me of my grievous
wound."

So said he, and the barge with oar
and sail
Moved from the brink, like some full-
breasted swan

That, fluting a wild carol ere her
death,

Ruffles her pure cold plume, and
takes the flood

With swarthy webs. Long stood
Sir Bedivere

Revolving many memories, till the
hull

Look'd one black dot against the
verge of dawn,

And on the mere the wailing died
away.

At length he groan'd, and turning
slowly clomb

The last hard footstep of that iron
crag ;

Thence mark'd the black hull moving
yet, and cried,

" He passes to be king among the
dead,

And after healing of his grievous
wound

He comes again ; but—if he come no
more—

O me, be yon dark Queens in yon
black boat,

Who shriek'd and wail'd, the three
whereat we gazed

On that high day, when, clothed with
living light,

They stood before his throne in
silence, friends

Of Arthur, who should help him at his
need ? "

Then from the dawn it seem'd there
came, but faint

As from beyond the limit of the
world,

Like the last echo born of a great cry,
Sounds, as if some fair city were one
voice

Around a king returning from his
wars.

Thereat once more he moved about,
and clomb

E'en to the highest he could climb,
and saw,

Straining his eyes beneath an arch	Somewhere far off, pass on and on,
of hand,	and go
Or thought he saw, the speck that	From less to less and vanish into
bare the king,	light.
Down that long water opening on the	And the new sun rose bringing the
deep	new year.

MISCELLANEOUS

NORTHERN FARMER

NEW STYLE

DOSTN'T thou 'ear my 'erse's legs, as
 they canters awaay?
 Proputtty, proputtty, proputtty—that's
 what I 'ears 'em saay.
 Proputtty, proputtty, proputtty—Sam,
 thou's an ass for thy paains:
 Theer's moor sense i' one o' 'is legs nor
 in all thy braa'ns.

IF

Woä—theer's a craw to pluck wi' tha,
 Sam ; yon's parson's 'ouse—
 Doesn't thou know that a man mun be
 eäther a man or a mouse ?
 Time to think on it then ; for thou'll
 be twenty to wecäk.¹
 Proputty, proputty—woä then woä
 —let ma 'ear mysen speäk.

III

Me an' thy muther, Sammy, 'as beän
a-talkin' o' thee;
Thou's been talkin' to muther, an'
she beän a tellin' it me.
Thou'll not marry for munny—thou's
sweet upo' parson's lass—
Noä—thou'll marry fur luvv—an' we
boäth on us thinks tha an ass.

IV

Seeä'd her todaäy goü by—Saäint's-
daäy—they was ringing the bells.

She's a beauty thou thinks—an' soa
is scoors o' gells,
Them as 'as munny an' all—wot's a
beauty?—the flower as blows.
But propetty, propetty sticks, an'
propetty, propetty graws.

v

Do'ant be stunt¹: taäke time: I
 knows what maäkes tha sa mad.
 Warn't I craäzied fur the lasses mysén
 when I wur a lad?
 But I knaw'd a Quaäker feller as
 often 'as tow'd ma this:
 "Doänt thou marry for munny, but
 goä wheer munny is!"

VI

An' I went wheer munny war : an'
thy mother coom to 'and,
Wi' lots o' munny laa'd by, an' a
nicetish bit o' land.
Maäybe she warn't a beauty :—I niver
giv it a thowt—
But warn't she as good to cuddle an'
kiss as a lass as 'ant nowt ?

VII

Parson's lass 'ant nowt, an' sh'
weänt 'a nowt when 'e's deäd,
Mun be a guvness, lad, or summut,
and addle³ her bread :
Why ? fur 'e's nobbut a curate, an'
weänt nivir git naw 'igher ;
An' 'e määde the bed as 'e lig's on
afoor 'e coom'd to the shire.

* This week.

² Obstinate.

3 Еягп.

And thin 'e coom'd to the parish wi'
lots o' 'Varsity debt,
Stook to his taa'il they did, an' 'e 'ant
got shut on 'em yet.
An' 'e ligs on 'is back i' the grip, wi'
noän to lend 'im a shove,
Woorse nor a far-welter'd¹ yowe: fur,
Sammy, 'e married fur luvv.

IX

Luvv? what's luvv? thou can luvv
thy lass an' 'er munny too,
Maakin' 'em goä together as they've
good right to do.
Could'n I luvv thy muther by cause
o' 'er munny laa'id by?
Naäy—tur I luvv'd 'er a vast sight
moor fur it: reäson why.

X

Ay an' thy muther says thou wants
to marry the lass,
Cooms of a gentleman burn: an' we
boäth on us thinks tha an ass.
Woä then, proputt, wiltha?—an ass
as near as mays nowt—²
Woä then, wiltha? dangtha l—the
bees is as fell as owt.³

XI

Breäk me a bit o' the esh for his 'eä'd,
lad, out o' the fence!
Gentleman burn! what's gentleman
burn? is it shillins an' pence?
Proputt, proputt's ivrything 'ere,
an', Sammy, I'm blest
If it isn't the saäme oop yonder, fur
them as 'as it's the best.

XII

Tis'n them as 'as munny as breäks
into 'ouses an' steäls,
Them as 'as coäts to their backs an'
taäkes their regular meäls.
Noä, but it's them as niver knaws
wheer a meäl's to be 'ad.
Taäke my word for it, Sammy, the
poor in a loomp is bad.

XIII

Them or thir feythers, tha sees, mun
'a beän a laäzy lot,

¹ Or fow-welter'd—said of a sheep lying on its back in the furrow.

² Makes nothing.

³ The flies are as fierce as anything.

Fur work mun 'a gone to the gittin'
whiniver munny was got.
Feyther 'ad ammost nowt; leäs,
waays 'is munny was 'id.
But 'e tued an' moil'd 'issén deä'd,
an 'e died a good un, 'e did.

XIV

Look thou theer wheer Wigglesby
beck comes out by the 'ill!
Feyther run up to the farm, an' I runs
up to the mill;
An' I'll run up to the brig, an' that
thou'll live to see;
And if thou marries a good un I'll
leäve the land to thee.

Thim's my noätions, Sammy, wheer-
by I means to stick;
But if thou marries a bad un, I'll
leäve the land to Dick.—
Coom oop, proputt, proputt—
that's what I 'ears 'im saäy—
Proputt, proputt, proputt—
canter an' canter awaäy.

THE GOLDEN SUPPER

[This poem is founded upon a story in Boccaccio.

A young lover, Julian, whose cousin and foster-sister, Camilla, has been wedded to his friend and rival, Lionel, endeavours to narrate the story of his own love for her, and the strange sequel of it. He speaks of having been haunted in delirium by visions and the sound of bells, sometimes tolling for a funeral, and at last ringing for a marriage; but he breaks away, overcome, as he approaches the Event, and a witness to it completes the tale.]

* * *

HE flies the event: he leaves the
event to me:
Poor Julian—how he rush'd away;
the bells,
Those marriage bells, echoing in ear
and heart—
But cast a parting glance at me,
you saw,
As who should say 'continue.'
Well, he had
One golden hour—of triumph shall I
say?
Solace at least—before he left his
home.

Would you had seen him in that
hour of his!

He moved thro' all of it majestically—
 Restrain'd himself quite to the close
 —but now—

Whether they *were* his lady's
 marriage-bells,
 Or prophets of them in his fantasy,
 I never ask'd : but Lionel and the
 girl
 Were wedded, and our Julian came
 again
 Back to his mother's house among
 the pines.
 But these, their gloom, the mountains
 and the Bay,
 The whole land weigh'd him down
 as *Ætna* does
 The Giant of Mythology : he would
 go,
 Would leave the land for ever, and
 had gone
 Surely, but for a whisper " Go not
 yet,"
 Some warning, and divinely as it
 seem'd
 By that which follow'd—but of this I
 deem
 As of the visions that he told—the
 event | life,
 Glanced back upon them in his after
 And partly made them—tho' he
 knew it not.

And thus he stay'd and would not
 look at her—
 No not for months : but, when the
 eleventh moon
 After their marriage lit the lover's
 Bay,
 Heard yet once more the tolling bell,
 and said,
 Would you could toll me out of life,
 but found—
 All softly as his mother broke it to
 him—
 A crueller reason than a crazy ear,
 For that low knell tolling his lady
 dead—
 Dead—and had lain three days with-
 out a pulse :
 All that look'd on her had pronounced
 her dead.
 And so they bore her (for in Julian's
 land

They never nail a dumb head up in
 elm),
 Bore her free-faced to the free airs of
 heaven,
 And laid her in the vault of her own
 kin.

What did he then ? not die : he is
 here and hale—
 Not plunge headforemost from the
 mountain there,
 And leave the name of Lover's Leap :
 not he :
 He knew the meaning of the whisper
 now,
 Thought that he knew it. " This, I
 stay'd for this ;
 O love, I have not seen you for so
 long.
 Now, now, will I go down into the
 grave,
 I will be all alone with all I love,
 And kiss her on the lips. She is his no
 more :
 The dead returns to me, and I go
 down
 To kiss the dead."

The fancy stirr'd him so
 He rose and went, and entering the
 dim vault,
 And, making there a sudden light,
 beheld
 All round about him that which all
 will be.
 The light was but a flash, and went
 again.
 Then at the far end of the vault he
 saw | face ;
 His lady with the moonlight on her
 Her breast as in a shadow-prison,
 bars
 Of black and bands of silver, which
 the moon
 Struck from an open grating over-
 head
 High in the wall, and all the rest of her
 Drown'd in the gloom and horror of
 the vault.

" It was my wish," he said, " to
 pass, to sleep,
 To rest, to be with her—till the great
 day

Peal'd on us with that music which rights all,
 And raised us hand in hand." And kneeling there
 Down in the dreadful dust that once was man,
 Dust, as he said, that once was loving hearts,
 Hearts that had beat with such a love as mine—
 Not such as mine, no, nor for such as her—
 He softly put his arm about her neck
 And kiss'd her more than once, till helpless death
 And silence made him bold—nay, but I wrong him,
 He reverenced his dear lady even in death;
 But, placing his true hand upon her heart,
 "O, you warm heart," he moan'd, "not even death
 Can chill you all at once": then starting, thought
 His dreams had come again. "Do I wake or sleep?
 Or am I made immortal, or my love Mortal once more?" It beat—the heart—it beat:
 Faint—but it beat: at which his own began
 To pulse with such a vehemence that it drown'd
 The feeblér motion underneath his hand.
 But when at last his doubts were satisfied, [chre,
 He raised her softly from the sepulchre,
 And, wrapping her all over with the cloak
 He came in, and now striding fast, and now
 Sitting awhile to rest, but evermore Holding his golden burthen in his arms,
 So bore her thro' the solitary land
 Back to the mother's house where she was born.

 There the good mother's kindly ministering,
 With half a night's appliances, recall'd
 Her fluttering life: she raised an eye that ask'd
 "Where?" till the things familiar to her youth
 Had made a silent answer: then she spoke,
 "Here! and how came I here?" and learning it
 (They told her somewhat rashly as I think)
 At once began to wander and to wail,
 "Ay, but you know that you must give me back:
 Send! bid him come"; but Lionel was away—
 Stung by his loss had vanish'd, none knew where.
 "He casts me out," she wept, "and goes"—a wail
 That seeming something, yet was nothing, born
 Not from believing mind, but shatter'd nerve,
 Yet haunting Julian, as her own reproof
 At some precipitance in her burial. Then, when her own true spirit had return'd,
 "O yes, and you," she said, "and none but you. [again,
 For you have given me life and love
 And none but you yourself shall tell him of it,
 And you shall give me back when he returns."
 "Stay then a little," answer'd Julian, "here,
 And keep yourself, none knowing, to yourself;
 And I will do your will. I may not stay,
 No, not an hour; but send me notice of him
 When he returns, and then will I return,
 And I will make a solemn offering of you
 To him you love." And faintly she replied,
 "And I will do *your* will, and none shall know."

 Not know? with such a secret to be known.

But all their house was old and loved
 them both,
 And all the house had known the loves
 of both ;
 Had died almost to serve them any
 way,
 And all the land was waste and
 solitary :
 And then he rode away ; but after
 this,
 An hour or two, Camilla's travail
 came
 Upon her, and that day a boy was
 born,
 Heir of his face and land, to Lionel.

And thus our lonely lover rode
 away,
 And pausing at a hostel in a marsh,
 There fever seized upon him ; myself
 was then
 Travelling that land, and meant to
 rest an hour ;
 And sitting down to such a base
 repast,
 It makes me angry yet to speak of
 it—
 I heard a groaning overhead, and
 climb'd
 The moulder'd stairs (for everything
 was vile) [him,
 And in a loft, with none to wait on
 Found, as it seem'd, a skeleton alone,
 Raving of dead men's dust and beat-
 ing hearts.

A dismal hostel in a dismal land,
 A flat malarian world of reed and
 rush !
 But there from fever and my care of
 him
 Sprang up a friendship that may help
 us yet.
 For while we roam'd along the
 dreary coast,
 And waited for her message, piece by
 piece
 I learnt the drearier story of his life ;
 And, tho' he loved and honour'd
 Lionel,
 Found that the sudden wail his lady
 made
 Dwelt in his fancy : did he know her
 worth,

Her beauty even ? should he not be
 taught,
 Ev'n by the price that others set upon
 it,
 The value of that jewel he had to
 guard ?

Suddenly came her notice and we
 past,
 I with our lover to his native Bay.

This love is of the brain, the mind,
 the soul :
That makes the sequel pure ; tho'
 some of us
 Beginning at the sequel know no
 more.
 Not such am I : and yet I say, the
 bird
 That will not hear my call, however
 sweet,
 But if my neighbour whistle answers
 him—
 What matter ? there are others in
 the wood.
 Yet when I saw her (and I thought
 him crazed,
 Tho' not with such a craziness as
 needs
 A cell and keeper), those dark eyes of
 hers—
 Oh ! such dark eyes ! and not her
 eyes alone,
 But all from these to where she
 touch'd on earth,
 For such a craziness as Julian's
 seem'd
 No less than one divine apology.

So sweetly and so modestly she
 came
 To greet us, her young hero in her
 arms !
 " Kiss him," she said. " You gave
 me life again.
 He, but for you, had never seen it
 once.
 His other father you ! Kiss him, and
 then
 Forgive him, if his name be Julian
 too."

Talk of lost hopes and broken
 heart ! his own

Sent such a flame into his face, I (I told you that he had his golden
knew hour),
Some sudden vivid pleasure hit him And such a feast, ill-suited as it
there. seem'd

But he was all the more resolved
to go,
And sent at once to Lionel, praying
him
By that great love they both had
borne the dead,
To come and revel for one hour with
him
Before he left the land for evermore ;
And then to friends—they were not
many—who lived
Scatteringly about that lonely land
of his,
And bade them to a banquet of fare-
wells.

And Julian made a solemn feast : I
never
Sat at a costlier ; for all round his
hall
From column on to column, as in a
wood,
Not such as here—an equatorial one,
Great garlands swung and blossom'd ;
and beneath,
Heirlooms, and ancient miracles of
Art,
Chalice and salver, wines that,
Heaven knows when,
Had suck'd the fire of some forgotten
sun,
And kept it thro' a hundred years of
gloom,
Yet glowing in a heart of ruby—cups
Where nymph and god ran ever
round in gold—
Others of glass as costly—some with
gems

Movable and rescttable at will,
And trebling all the rest in value—
Ah heavens !
Why need I tell you all ?—suffice to
say
That whatsoever such a house as his,
And his was old, has in it rare or fair
Was brought before the guest : and
they, the guests,
Wonder'd at some strange light in
Julian's eyes

T.P.W.

To such a time, to Lionel's loss and
his,
And that resolved self-exile from a
land
He never would revisit, such a feast
So rich, so strange, and stranger
ev'n than rich,
But rich as for the nuptials of a king.

And stranger yet, at one end of the
hall
Two great funereal curtains, looping
down,
Parted a little ere they met the floor,
About a picture of his lady, taken
Some years before, and falling hid the
frame.
And just above the parting was a
lamp :
So the sweet figure folded round with
night
Seem'd stepping out of darkness with
a smile.

Well then—our solemn feast—we
ate and drank,
And might—the wines being of such
nobleness—
Have jested also, but for Julian's eyes,
And something weird and wild about
it all :
What was it ? for our lover seldom
spoke,
Scarce touch'd the meats ; but ever
and anon
A priceless goblet with a priceles
wine
Arising, show'd he drank beyond
his use ;
And when the feast was near an end,
he said :

" There is a custom in the Orient
friends—
I read of it in Persia—when a man
Will honour those who feast with him,
he brings
And shows them whatsoever he
accounts
Of all his treasures the most beautiful,

Gold, jewels, arms, whatever it may be. And fed, and cherish'd him, and saved his life.

This custom—" I ask you now, should this first master claim

Pausing here a moment, all The guests broke in upon him with His service, whom does it belong to? meeting hands him

And cries about the banquet—" Who thrust him out, or him who saved his life? "

" Beautiful !

Who could desire more beauty at a feast ? " This question, so flung down before the guests,

The lover answer'd, " There is And balanced either way by each, at more than one length

Here sitting who desires it. Laud When some were doubtful how the law would hold,

me not Was handed over by consent of all To one who had not spoken, Lionel.

Before my time, but hear me to the close. Fair speech was his, and delicate of phrase.

This custom steps yet further when the guest And he beginning languidly—his loss Weigh'd on him yet—but warming

Is loved and honour'd to the uttermost. as he went,

For after he has shown him gems or gold, Glanced at the point of law, to pass it by,

He brings and sets before him in rich guise Affirming that as long as either lived,

That which is thrice as beautiful as these, By all the laws of love and gratefulness,

The beauty that is dearest to his heart— The service of the one so saved was due

' O my heart's lord, would I could All to the saver—adding, with a smile,

show you,' he says, The first for many weeks—a semi-

' Ev'n my heart, too,' And I propose to-night As at a strong conclusion—" body and soul

To show you what is dearest to my heart, And life and limbs, all his to work his will."

And my heart, too. Then Julian made a secret sign to me

" But solve me first a doubt. To bring Camilla down before them all.

I knew a man, nor many years ago ; And crossing her own picture as she came,

He had a faithful servant, one who loved And looking as much lovelier as herself

His master more than all on earth beside Is lovelier than all others—on her head

beside. A diamond circlet, and from under this

He falling sick, and seeming close on death, A veil, that seem'd no more than gilded air,

His master would not wait until he died, Flying by each fine ear, an Eastern gauze

But bade his menials bear him from the door, And leave him in the public way to die.

And leave him in the public way to die. I knew another, not so long ago, Who found the dying servant, took him home,

With seeds of gold—so, with that
 grace of hers,
 Slow-moving as a wave against the
 wind,
 That flings a mist behind it in the
 sun—
 And bearing high in arms the mighty
 babe,
 The younger Julian, who himself was
 crown'd
 With roses, none so rosy as himself—
 And over all her babe and her the
 jewels
 Of many generations of his house
 Sparkled and flash'd, for he had
 decked them out
 As for a solemn sacrifice of love—
 So she came in :—I am long in telling
 it—
 I never yet beheld a thing so strange,
 Sad, sweet, and strange together—
 floated in,—
 While all the guests in mute amaze-
 ment rose,—
 And slowly pacing to the middle hall,
 Before the board, there paused and
 stood, her breast [feet,
 Hard-heaving, and her eyes upon her
 Not daring yet to glance at Lionel.
 But him she carried, him nor lights
 nor feast
 Dazed or amazed, nor eyes of men ;
 who cared
 Only to use his own, and staring wide
 And hungering for the gilt and
 jewell'd world
 About him, look'd, as he is like to
 prove,
 When Julian goes, the lord of all he
 saw.

"My guests," said Julian : "you
 are honour'd now
 Ev'n to the uttermost : in her behold
 Of all my treasures the most beautiful,
 Of all things upon earth the dearest
 to me."
 Then waving us a sign to seat our-
 selves,
 Led his dear lady to a chair of state.
 And I, by Lionel sitting, saw his face
 Fire, and dead ashes and all fire again
 Thrice in a second, felt him tremble
 too,

And heard him muttering, "So like,
 so like ;
 She never had a sister. I knew none.
 Some cousin of his and hers—O God,
 so like !"
 And then he suddenly ask'd her if she
 were.
 She shook, and cast her eyes down,
 and was dumb.
 And then some other question'd if
 she came
 From foreign lands, and still she did
 not speak.
 Another, if the boy were hers : but
 she
 To all their queries answer'd not a
 word,
 Which made the amazement more,
 till one of them
 Said, shuddering, "Her spectre !"
 But his friend
 Replied, in half a whisper, "Not at
 least [to.
 The spectre that will speak if spoken
 Terrible pity, if one so beautiful
 Prove, as I almost dread to find her,
 dumb !"

But Julian, sitting by her, answer'd
 all :
 "She is but dumb, because in her
 you see
 That faithful servant whom we spoke
 about,
 Obedient to her second master now ;
 Which will not last. I have here to-
 night a guest
 So bound to me by common love and
 loss—
 What ! shall I bind him more ? in
 his behalf,
 Shall I exceed the Persian, giving him
 That which of all things is the dearest
 to me,
 Not only showing ? and he himself
 pronounced
 That my rich gift is wholly mine to
 give.

"Now all be dumb, and promise
 all of you
 Not to break in on what I say by word
 Or whisper, while I show you all my
 heart."

And then began the story of his love
 As here to-day, but not so wordily—
 The passionate moment would not
 suffer that—
 Past thro' his visions to the burial ;
 thence
 Down to this last strange hour in his
 own hall ;
 And then rose up, and with him all his
 guests
 Once more as by enchantment ; all
 but he,
 Lionel, who fain had risen, but fell
 again,
 And sat as if in chains—to whom he
 said :

" Take my free gift, my cousin,
 for my wife ;
 And were it only for the giver's sake,
 And tho' she seem so like the one you
 lost,
 Yet cast her not away so suddenly,
 Lest there be none left here to bring
 her back :
 I leave this land for ever." Here he
 ceased.

Then taking his dear lady by one
 hand,
 And bearing, on one arm the noble
 babe, | Lionel.
 He slowly brought them both to
 And there the widower husband and
 dead wife
 Rush'd each at each with a cry, that
 rather seem'd
 For some new death than for a life
 renew'd ;
 Whereat the very babe began to
 wail ;
 At once they turn'd, and caught and
 brought him in
 To their charm'd circle, and, half-
 killing him
 With kisses, round him closed and
 claspt again.
 But Lionel, when at last he freed
 himself
 From wife and child, and lifted up a
 face
 All over glowing with the sun of life,
 And love, and boundless thanks—
 the sight of this :

So bright our good friend, that
 turning to me
 And saying, " It is over : let us go"—
 There were our horses ready at the
 doors—
 We bade them no farewell, but mount-
 ing these
 He past for ever from his native
 land ;
 And I with him, my Julian, back to
 mine.

THE VICTIM

I

A PLAGUE upon the people fell,
 A famine after laid them low,
 Then thorp and byre arose in fire,
 For on them brake the sudden foe ;
 So thick they died the people cried
 " The Gods are moved against the
 land."
 The Priest in horror about his altar
 To Thor and Odin lifted a hand :
 " Help us from famine
 And plague and strife !
 What would you have of us ?
 Human life ?
 Were it our nearest,
 Were it our dearest,
 (Answer, O answer)
 We give you his life."

II

But still the foeman spoil'd and
 burn'd,
 And cattle died, and deer in wood,
 And bird in air, and fishes turn'd
 And whiten'd all the rolling flood ;
 And dead men lay all over the way,
 Or down in a furrow scathed with
 flame :
 And ever and aye the Priesthood
 moan'd
 Till at last it seem'd that an answer
 came :
 " The King is happy
 In child and wife ;
 Take you his dearest,
 Give us a life."

III

The Priest went out by heath and
 hill ;
 The King was hunting in the wild ;

They found the mother sitting still ;
 She cast her arms about the child.
 The child was only eight summers old,
 His beauty still with his years
 increased,

His face was ruddy, his hair was gold,
 He seem'd a victim due to the
 priest.

The Priest beheld him,
 And cried with joy,
 " The Gods have answer'd :
 We give them the boy."

IV

The King return'd from out the wild,
 He bore but little game in hand ;
 The mother said " They have taken
 the child

To spill his blood and heal the
 land :

The land is sick, the people diseased,
 And blight and famine on all the
 lea :

The holy Gods, they must be ap-
 peased,

So I pray you tell the truth to me.
 They have taken our son,
 They will have his life.
 Is *he* your dearest ?
 Or I, the wife ? "

V

The King bent low, with hand on
 brow,

He stay'd his arms upon his knee :
 " O wife, what use to answer now ?
 For now the Priest has judged for
 me."

The King was shaken with holy fear ;
 " The Gods," he said, " would
 have chosen well ;

Yet both are near, and both are dear,
 And which the dearest I cannot
 tell ! "

But the Priest was happy,
 His victim won :
 " We have his dearest,
 His only son ! "

VI

The rites prepared, the victim bared,
 The knife uprising toward the
 blow,

To the altar-stone she sprang alone,
 " Me, not my darling, no ! "

He caught her away with a sudden
 cry ;

Suddenly from him brake his wife,
 And shrieking " I am his dearest, I—
 I am his dearest ! " rush'd on the
 knife.

And the Priest was happy,
 " O, Father Odin,
 We give you a life.
 Which was his nearest ?
 Who was his dearest ?
 The Gods have answer'd ;
 We give them the wife ! "

WAGES

GLORY of warrior, glory of orator,
 glory of song,

Paid with a voice flying by to be
 lost on an endless sea—

Glory of Virtue, to fight, to struggle,
 to right the wrong—

Nay, but she aim'd not at glory, no
 lover of glory she :

Give her the glory of going on, and
 still to be.

The wages of sin is death : if the
 wages of Virtue be dust,

Would she have heart to endure for
 the life of the worm and the fly ?

She desires no isles of the blest, no
 quiet seats of the just,

To rest in a golden grove, or to bask
 in a summer sky :

Give her the wages of going on, and
 not to die.

THE HIGHER PANTHEISM

THE sun, the moon, the stars, the
 seas, the hills and the plains—
 Are not these, O Soul, the Vision of
 Him Who reigns ?

Is not the Vision He ? tho' He be not
 that which He seems ?

Dreams are true while they last, and
 do we not live in dreams ?

Earth, these solid stars, this weight of
 body and limb,

Are they not sign and symbol of thy
 division from Him ?

Dark is the world to thee : thyself
 art the reason why ;

For is He not all but thou, that hast
power to feel "I am I?"

Glory about thee, without thee; and
thou fulfillest thy doom,
Making Him broken gleams, and a
stifled splendour and gloom.

Speak to Him thou for He hears, and
Spirit with Spirit can meet—
Closer is He than breathing, and
nearer than hands and feet.

God is law, say the wise; O Soul,
and let us rejoice,
For if He thunder by law the thunder
is yet His voice.

Law is God, say some: no God at all,
says the fool;
For all we have power to see is a
straight staff bent in a pool;

And the ear of man cannot hear, and
the eye of man cannot see;
But if we could see and hear, this
Vision—were it not He?

FLOWER in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies;—
Hold you here, root and all, in my
hand,
Little flower—but if I could under-
stand
What you are, root and all, and all in
all,
I should know what God and man is.

LUCRETIVS

LUCILIA, wedded to Lucretius, found
Her master cold; for when the morn-
ing flush
Of passion and the first embrace had
died
Between them, tho' he loved her none
the less,
Yet often when the woman heard his
foot
Return from pacings in the field, and
ran
To greet him with a kiss, the master
took
Small notice, or austere, for—his
mind

Half buried in some weightier argu-
ment,

Or fancy-borne perhaps upon the rise
And long roll of the Hexameter—he
past

To turn and ponder those three hun-
dred scrolls

Left by the Teacher whom he held
divine.

She brook'd it not; but wrathful,
petulant,

Dreaming some rival, sought and
found a witch

Who brew'd the philtre which had
power, they said,

To lead an errant passion home again.
And this, at times, she mingled with
his drink,

And this destroy'd him; for the
wicked broth

Confused the chemic labour of the
blood,

And tickling the brute brain within
the man's

Made havock among those tender
cells, and check'd

His power to shape: he loath'd
himself; and once

After a tempest woke upon a morn
That mock'd him with returning
calm, and cried;

"Storm in the night! for thrice
I heard the rain

Rushing; and once the flash of a
thunderbolt—

Methought I never saw so fierce a
fork—

Struck out the streaming mountain-
side, and show'd

A riotous confluence of watercourses
Blanching and billowing in a hollow
of it,

Where all but yester-eve was dusty,
dry.

"Storm, and what dreams, ye holy
Gods, what dreams!

For thrice I waken'd after dreams.
Perchance

We do but recollect the dreams that
come

Just ere the waking: terrible! for it
seem'd

A void was made in Nature ; all her
 bonds
 Crack'd ; and I saw the flaring atom-
 streams
 And torrents of her myriad universe,
 Ruining along the illimitable inane,
 Fly on to clash together again, and
 make
 Another and another frame of things
 For ever : that was mine, my dream,
 I knew it—
 Of and belonging to me, as the dog
 With inward yelp and restless forefoot
 plies
 His function of the woodland : but
 the next ! [shed
 I thought that all the blood by Sylla
 Came driving rainlike down again on
 earth,
 And where it dash'd the reddening
 meadow, sprang [teeth,
 No dragon warriors from Cadmean
 For these I thought my dream would
 show to me,
 But girls, Hetairai, curious in their art,
 Hired animalisms, vile as those that
 made
 The mulberry-faced Dictator's orgies
 worse
 Than aught they fable of the quiet
 Gods.
 And hands they mixt, and yell'd and
 round me drove
 In narrowing circles till I yell'd again
 Half-suffocated, and sprang up, and
 saw—
 Was it the first beam of my latest
 day ?
 “ Then, then, from utter gloom
 stood out the breasts,
 The breasts of Helen, and hoveringly
 a sword
 Now over and now under, now direct,
 Pointed itself to pierce, but sank
 down shamed
 At all that beauty ; and as I stared, a
 fire,
 The fire that left a roofless Ilium,
 Shot out of them, and scorch'd me
 that I woke.
 “ Is this thy vengeance, holy
 Venus, thine,
 Because I would not one of thine own
 doves,
 Not ev'n a rose, were offer'd to thee ?
 thine,
 Forgetful how my rich procæmion
 makes
 Thy glory fly along the Italian field,
 In lays that will outlast thy Deity ?
 “ Deity ? nay, thy worshippers.
 My tongue
 Trips, or I speak profanely. Which
 of these
 Angers thee most, or angers thee at
 all ?
 Not if thou be'st of those who, far
 aloof
 From envy, hate and pity, and spite
 and scorn,
 Live the great life which all our
 greatest fain
 Would follow, center'd in eternal
 calm.
 “ Nay, if thou canst, O Goddess,
 like ourselves
 Touch, and be touch'd, then would I
 cry to thee
 To kiss thy Mavors, roll thy tender
 arms
 Round him, and keep him from the
 lust of blood
 That makes a steaming slaughter-
 house of Rome.
 “ Ay, but I meant not thee ; I
 meant not her,
 Whom all the pines of Ida shook to
 see
 Slide from that quiet heaven of hers,
 and tempt
 The Trojan, while his neat-herds
 were abroad ;
 Nor her that o'er her wounded hunter
 wept
 Her Deity false in human-amorous
 tears ;
 Nor whom her beardless apple-
 arbitrator
 Decided fairest. Rather, O ye Gods,
 Poet-like, as the great Sicilian called
 Calliope to grace his golden verse—
 Ay, and this Kypris also—did I take
 That popular name of thine to shadow
 forth

The all-generating powers and genial
 heat
 Of Nature, when she strikes thro' the
 thick blood
 Of cattle, and light is large, and lambs
 are glad
 Nosing the mother's udder, and the
 bird
 Makes his heart voice amid the blaze
 of flowers :
 Which things appear the work of
 mighty Gods.

"The Gods ! and if I go *my* work is
 left
 Unfinish'd—*if* I go. The Gods, who
 haunt
 The lucid interspace of world and
 world,
 Where never creeps a cloud, or
 moves a wind,
 Nor ever falls the least white star of
 snow,
 Nor ever lowest roll of thunder
 moans,
 Nor sound of human sorrow mounts
 to mar
 Their sacred everlasting calm ! and
 such,
 Not all so fine, nor so divine a calm,
 Not such, nor all unlike it, man may
 gain
 Letting his own life go. The Gods,
 the Gods !
 If all be atoms, how then should the
 Gods
 Being atomic not be dissoluble,
 Not follow the great law ? My
 master held
 That Gods there are, for all men so
 believe. [meant
 I prest my footsteps into his, and
 Surely to lead my Memmius in a train
 Of flowery clauses onward to the
 proof
 That Gods there are, and deathless.
 Meant ? I meant ?
 I have forgotten what I meant : my
 mind
 Stumbles, and all my faculties are
 lamed.

"Look where another of our Gods,
 the Sun,

Apollo, Delius, or of older use
 All-seeing Hyperion—what you
 will—
 Has mounted yonder ; since he never
 sware,
 Except his wrath were wreak'd on
 wretched man,
 That he would only shine among the
 dead
 Hereafter ; tales ! for never yet on
 earth
 Could dead flesh creep, or bits of
 roasting ox
 Moan round the spit—nor knows he
 what he sees
 King of the East altho' he seem, and
 girt
 With song and flame and fragrance,
 slowly lifts
 His golden feet on those empurpled
 stairs
 That climb into the windy halls of
 heaven :
 And here he glances on an eye new-
 born,
 And gets for greeting but a wail of
 pain ;
 And here he stays upon a freezing orb
 That fain would gaze upon him to the
 last ;
 And here upon a yellow eyelid fall'n
 And closed by those who mourn a
 friend in vain,
 Not thankful that his troubles are no
 more.
 And me, altho' his fire is on my face
 Blinding, he sees not, nor at all can
 tell
 Whether I mean this day to end
 myself,
 Or lend an ear to Plato where he says,
 That men like soldiers may not quit
 the post [holds
 Allotted by the Gods : but he that
 The Gods are careless, wherefore need
 he care
 Greatly for them, nor rather plunge
 at once,
 Being troubled, wholly out of sight,
 and sink
 Past earthquake—ay, and gout and
 stone, that break
 Body toward death, and palsy, death-
 in-life,

And wretched age—and worst disease To laugh at—more to laugh at in
 of all, myself—
 These prodigies of myriad naked- For look! what is it? there? yon
 nesses, arbutus
 And twisted shapes of lust, unspeak- Totters; a noiseless riot underneath
 able, Strikes through the wood, sets all the
 Abominable, strangers at my hearth, tops quivering—
 Not welcome, harpies miring every The mountain quickens into Nymph
 dish, and Faun;
 The phantom husks of something And here an Oread—how the sun
 foully done, delights
 And fleeting thro' the boundless To glance and shift about her slip-
 universe, pery sides,
 And blasting the long quiet of my And rosy knees and supple rounded-
 breast, ness,
 With animal heat and dire insanity? And budded bosom-peaks—who this
 way runs

“ How should the mind, except it Before the rest—A satyr, a satyr, see,
 loved them, clasp Follows; but him I proved impossible;
 These idols to herself? or do they Twy-natured is no nature: yet he
 fly draws
 Now thinner, and now thicker, like Nearer and nearer, and I scan him
 the flakes now
 In a fall of snow, and so press in, Beastlier than any phantom of his
 perforce kind
 Of multitude, as crowds that in an That ever butted his rough brother-
 hour brute
 Of civic tumult jam the doors, and For lust or lusty blood or provender:
 bear I hate, abhor, spit, sicken at him;
 The keepers down, and throng, their and she
 rags and they, Loathes him as well; such a precipi-
 The basest, far into that council-hall tate heel,
 Where sit the best and stateliest of Fledged as it were with Mercury's
 the land? ankle-wing,

“ Can I not fling this horror off Whirls her to me: but will she fling
 me again, herself,
 Seeing with how great ease Nature Shameless upon me? Catch her,
 can smile, goatfoot: nay,
 Balmier and nobler from her bath of Hide, hide them, million-myrtled
 storm, wilderness,
 At random ravage? and how easily And cavern-shadowing laurels, hide I
 do I wish—
 The mountain there has cast his What?—that the bush were leafless?
 cloudy slough, or to whelm
 Now towering o'er him in serenest air, All of them in one massacre? O ye
 A mountain o'er a mountain,—ay Gods,
 and within I know you careless, yet, behold, to
 All hollow as the hopes and fears of you
 men? From childly wont and ancient use I
 call—

“ But who was he, that in the I thought I lived securely as your-
 garden snared selves—
 Picus and Faunus, rustic Gods? a No lewdness, narrowing envy, mon-
 tale key-spite,

No madness of ambition, avarice,
 none ;
 No larger feast than under plane or
 pine
 With neighbours laid along the grass,
 to take
 Only such cups as left us friendly-
 warm,
 Affirming each his own philosophy—
 Nothing to mar the sober majesties
 Of settled, sweet, Epicurean life.
 But now it seems some unseen
 monster lays
 His vast and filthy hands upon my
 will,
 Wrenching it backward into his ; and
 spoils
 My bliss in being ; and it was not
 great ;
 For save when shutting reasons up
 in rhythm,
 Or Heliconian honey in living words,
 To make a truth less harsh, I often
 grew
 Tired of so much within our little life,
 Or of so little in our little life—
 Poor little life that toddles half an
 hour
 Crown'd with a flower or two, and
 there an end—
 And since the nobler pleasure seems
 to fade,
 Why should I, beastlike as I find
 myself,
 Not manlike end myself ?—our
 privilege—
 What beast has heart to do it ? And
 what man,
 What Roman would be dragg'd in
 triumph thus ?
 Not I ; not he, who bears one name
 with her
 Whose death-blow struck the dateless
 doom of kings,
 When, brooking not the Tarquin in
 her veins,
 She made her blood in sight of
 Collatine [less air,
 And all his peers, flushing the guilt-
 Spout from the maiden fountain in
 her heart.
 And from it sprang the Common-
 wealth, which breaks
 As I am breaking now !

" And therefore now
 Let her, that is the womb and tomb
 of all,
 Great Nature, take, and forcing far
 apart
 Those blind beginnings that have
 made me man
 Dash them anew together at her will
 Through all her cycles—into man
 once more,
 Or beast or bird or fish, or opulent
 flower .
 But till this cosmic order everywhere
 Shatter'd into one earthquake in one
 day
 Cracks all to pieces,—and that hour
 perhaps
 Is not so far when momentary man
 Shall seem no more a something to
 himself,
 But he, his hopes and hates, his homes
 and fanes,
 And even his bones long laid within
 the grave,
 The very sides of the grave itself
 shall pass,
 Vanishing, atom and void, atom and
 void,
 Into the unseen for ever,—till that
 hour,
 My golden work in which I told a
 truth
 That stays the rolling Ixionian
 wheel,
 And numbs the Fury's ringlet-snake,
 and plucks
 The mortal soul from out immortal
 hell,
 Shall stand : ay, surely : then it fails
 at last
 And perishes as I must ; for O Thou,
 Passionless bride, divine Tranquillity,
 Yearn'd after by the wisest of the
 wise,
 Who fail to find thee, being as thou
 art
 Without one pleasure and without
 one pain,
 Howbeit I know thou surely must be
 mine
 Or soon or late, yet, out of season,
 thus
 I woo thee roughly, for thou carest
 not

Index of First Lines

	PAGE		PAGE
A city clerk, but gently born and bred ; . . .	397	Glory of warrior, glory of orator, glory of	
A plague upon the people fell . . .	480	song . . .	481
A Prince I was, blue-eyed, and fair in face	144	God bless our Prince and Bride ! . . .	423
A Spirit haunts the year's last hours . . .	29		
A still small voice spake unto me . . .	114	Half a league, half a league . . .	227
A storm was coming, but the winds were		Heaven weeps above the earth all night till	
still . . .	31	morn . . .	10
A touch, a kiss ! the charm was snapt . . .	12	He clasps the crag with hooked hands . . .	138
Ah, God ! the petty fools of rhyme . . .	421	He flies the event : he leaves the event to	
Airy, fairy Lillian . . .		me . . .	473
All along the valley, stream that flashest		Her arms across her breast she laid . . .	135
white . . .	410	Here, by this brook, we parted ; I to the	
All good things have not kept aloof . . .	15	East . . .	266
All precious things, discover'd late . . .	122	He rose at dawn and, fired with hope, . . .	411
All thoughts, all creeds, all dreams are true	14	He that only rules by terror . . .	426
Altho' I be the basest of mankind . . .	56	He thought to quell the stubborn hearts of	
And on her lover's arm she leant . . .	123	oak . . .	15
And Willy, my eldest-born, is gone, you say,		His eyes in eclipse . . .	4
little Anne ? . . .	403	Home they brought her warrior dead . . .	183
Angels have talked with him, and showed		Home they brought him slain with spears . . .	425
him thrones . . .	7	How long, O God, shall men be ridden down	20
Ask me no more : the moon may draw the			
sea . . .	190	I am any man's suitor . . .	1
As thro' the land at eve we went . . .	149	I built my soul a lordly pleasure-house . . .	52
As when with downcast eyes we muse and		If you're waking call me early, call me	
brood . . .	20	early, mother dear . . .	59
At Francis Allen's on the Christmas eve . . .	76	I had a vision when the night was late . . .	135
		I hate the dreadful hollow behind the little	
Below the thunders of the upper deep . . .	12	wood . . .	244
Blow ye the trumpet, gather from afar . . .	19	I held it truth, with him who sings . . .	200
Break, break, break . . .	139	I knew an old wife lean and poor . . .	75
Bury the Great Duke . . .		I know her by her angry air . . .	18
But were I loved, as I desire to be . . .		Illyrian woodlands, echoing falls . . .	131
		I'm glad I walk'd. How fresh the meadows	
Caress'd or chidden by the dainty hand . . .	425	look . . .	91
Clear-headed friend, whose joyful scorn . . .		In her ear he whispers gaily . . .	133
Clearly the blue river chimes in its flowing		I read, before my eyelids dropt their shade	64
Come not, when I am dead . . .		I see the wealthy miller yet . . .	43
Come, when no graver cares employ . . .		I send you here a sort of allegory . . .	52
Comrades, leave me here a little, while as		I stood upon the Mountain which o'erlooks . . .	417
yet 'tis early morn . . .		I' the glooming light . . .	5
Could I outwear my present state of woe		I thought to pass away before, and yet alive	
" Courage ! " he said, and pointed toward		I am . . .	60
the land . . .	61	It little profits that an idle king . . .	107
		It was the time when lilies blow . . .	132
Dear, near and true—no truer Time himself		I waited for the train at Coventry . . .	113
Deep on the convent-roof the snows . . .			
Don't thou 'ear my 'erse's legs, as they		King Arthur made new knights to fill the	
canters awa'ky ? . . .	472	gap . . .	453
Dust are our frames ; and, gilded dust, our			
pride . . .		Lady Clara Vere de Vere . . .	57
		Leodogran, the King of Cameliard . . .	428
Elaine the fair, Elaine the loveable . . .	327	Life and Thought have gone away . . .	35
Ere yet my heart was sweet Love's tomb		Like souls that balance joy and pain . . .	134
Every day hath its night . . .	6	Long as the heart beats life within her	
Eyes not down-dropt nor over-bright, but		breast . . .	424
fed . . .	22	Long lines of cliff breaking have left a	
		chasm . . .	366
Fair is her cottage in its place . . .	411	Love thou thy land, with love far-brought . . .	73
Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea . . .	135	Low-flowing breezes are roaming the broad	
Flower in the crannell wall . . .	482	valley dimmed in the gloaming . . .	
From noiseful arms, and acts of prowess		Lucilia, wedded to Lucretius, found . . .	482
done . . .	436		
Full knee-deep lies the winter snow . . .	71	Mine be the strength of spirit fierce and free	14

	PAGE		PAGE
Move eastward, happy earth, and leave . . .	138	The rain had fallen, the Poet arose . . .	139
My father left a park to me . . .	125	The sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hills and the plains— . . .	481
My good blade carves the casques of men . . .	126	The splendour falls on castle walls . . .	103
My heart is wasted with my woe . . .	34	The varied earth, the moving heaven . . .	9
My hope and heart is with thee—thou wilt be . . .	37	The varying year with blade and sheaf . . .	121
My life is full of weary days . . .	427	The winds, as at their hour of birth . . .	14
My Lords, we heard you speak: you told us all . . .	422	The wind, that beats the mountain, blows the woods decay, the woods decay and fall . . .	72
My Rosalind, my Rosalind . . .	29	There is a sound of thunder afar . . .	407
Mystery of mysteries . . .	29	There is no land like England . . .	423
Nature, so far as in her lies . . .	424	There is no land like England . . .	13
Now is done thy long day's work . . .	34	There is sweet music here that softer falls There lies a vale in Ida, lovelier . . .	62
O Beauty, passing beauty! sweetest Sweet! O Blackbird! I sing me something well . . .	76	These lame hexameters the strong-wing'd music of Homer! . . .	424
O darling room, my heart's delight . . .	70	These to His Memory—since he held them dear . . .	278
Of love that never found his earthly close . . .	104	This morning is the morning of the day . . .	82
Of old sat Freedom on the heights . . .	73	Thou art not steep'd in golden languors . . .	24
Oh God! my God! I have mercy now . . .	2	Thou, from the first, unborn, studying love . . .	11
Oh go not yet, my love . . .	7	Though Night hath climbed her peak of highest noon . . .	11
O, Lady Flora, let me speak . . .	121	Thou who stealest fire . . .	27
O Love, Love, Love! O withering might! O love, what hours were thine and mine . . .	46	Thy dark eyes open'd not . . .	41
O make me, fresher than the first green leaf . . .	274	Thy twilights are full'd I wot . . .	25
O me, my pleasant ramblings by the lake . . .	10	Thy voice is heard thro' rolling drums . . .	173
O mighty-mouth'd inventor of harmonies . . .	93	Two bees within a chrysal flower-bell rocked . . .	13
Once in a golden hour . . .	415	Two children in two neighbour villages . . .	36
Once more the gate behind me falls . . .	410	Uplift a thousand voices full and sweet . . .	423
On either side the river lie . . .	100	Ver not thou the poet's mind . . .	31
O plump head-waiter at <i>The Cock</i> . . .	38	Voice of the summer wind . . .	8
O sweet pale Margaret . . .	128	Wan Sculptor, weepst thou to take the cast We left behind the painted buoy . . .	426
O thou whose fringed lids I gaze upon . . .	70	Well, you shall have that song which Loonard wrote . . .	409
O thou chorus of indolent reviewers . . .	10	We were two daughters of one race . . .	105
O well for him whose will is strong! . . .	415	What does little birdie say . . .	51
Queen Guinevere had fled the court, and sat . . .	277	What time the mighty moon was gathering light . . .	402
Revered, beloved—O you that hold . . .	352	Where 'astu been saw long and meddlin' ere alone? . . .	34
Sainted Juliet! dearest name! . . .	21	When cats run home and light is come . . .	405
Sea-kings' daughter from over the sea . . .	5	When the breeze of a joyful dawn blow free . . .	25
Shall the hag Evil die with child of Good . . .	412	When will the stream be a-weary of flowing Where Claribel low-lyeth . . .	6
Sir Walter Vivian all a summer's day . . .	71	While about the shore of Mona those Neronian legionaries . . .	21
Slow snail'd the weary ramblers and saw . . .	140	Whither O whither love shall we go . . .	413
So all day long the noise of battle roll'd . . .	32	Who can say . . .	18
So closed our tale, of which I give you all . . .	77	Who fears to die? Who fears to die? . . .	13
So Hector said, and sea-like roar'd his host . . .	107	Who would be . . .	36
So, Lady Flora, take my lay . . .	416	With a half-glance upon the sky . . .	30
Still on the tower stood the vane . . .	124	With blackest moss the flower-plots . . .	23
Strong Son of God, immortal Love . . .	270	With farmer Allen at the farm abode . . .	87
Sure never yet was Antelope . . .	206	With one black shadow at its feet . . .	40
Sweet and low, sweet and low . . .	421	Year after year unto her feet . . .	122
Sweet Emma Moreland of yonder town . . .	157	You ask me, why, tho' ill at ease . . .	73
That story which the bold Sir Bedivere . . .	127	You east to ground the hope which once was mine . . .	9
The brave Geraint, a knight of Arthur's court . . .	464	You did late review my lays . . .	21
"The Bull, the Fleeces are cramm'd, and not a room . . .	279	You might have won the Poet's name . . .	131
The form, the form alone is eloquent! . . .	90	You must wake and call me early, call me early, mother dear . . .	58
The golden apple, the golden apple, the hallowed fruit . . .	425	Your ringlets, your ringlets . . .	412
The little white and the throatscook . . .	16	You shake your head . . .	124
The North wind fall'n, in the new-starred night . . .	5		
The pallid thunder-stricken sigh for gain . . .	16		
The plain was grassy, wild and bare . . .	11		
The Poet in a golden time was born . . .	30		

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